

LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 1189.—VOL. XLVI.

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 13, 1886.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[LOOKING ROUND SIMULTANEOUSLY THEY SAW A TALL, COMMANDING FIGURE DRESSED IN A LONG CLOAK.]

HILDA'S FORTUNES.

—10—

CHAPTER IX.

"Is this your first dinner party, Hilda?" The question was asked by Evelyn Monkton, as she and her cousin were being swiftly whirled along towards Dering Court.

"No," Hilda answered, "I have been to one before," and as she spoke the words her thoughts flew back to that dim November evening, when she had sat all alone in the schoolroom, looking out into the mirk and gloom of the foggy atmosphere, and feeling solitary and miserable beyond description.

What changes in a few short weeks!

Naturally enough, as her thoughts had got into this groove, they recalled that moment of peril when the hungry tongues of flame had shot up around her dress, and the courage of Eric Verrall had stood between her and a horrible death.

It was not the first time she had thought of him since that eventful evening; and the following day when they had again met—not

the first, nor the twentieth time even, for more often than she was aware—her memory dwelt on that brave young face which seemed to her the pleasantest she had ever met.

Would they ever meet again, she wondered, and she half sighed as she leaned forward and looked out of the window at the frost-bound landscape. Snow still lay upon the ground, and every drop of water exposed to the air, for miles round, was frozen hard. Winter had come in good earnest, but not before it might naturally be expected, for they were within a week of Christmas.

"Were you sighing?" asked Evelyn, incredulously, bending forward to look into her cousin's face.

"Perhaps so—don't you ever sigh?"

"Oh, yes," responded Evelyn. "But then I have reason for it, whereas you cannot possibly be otherwise than extremely happy. See how rich you are!"

"I wish you would not harp on that theme so constantly," exclaimed Hilda, with slight impatience; "you seem to be under the impression that one only requires wealth in order to be happy."

"Well, money will buy almost everything, and, joking apart, I really don't see what can make you sigh unless you are in love."

She peered forward, and in the light of the carriage lamps saw a deep flush rise to Hilda's cheeks. She had hazarded her guess without any serious idea of its being true, but that sudden blush made her think she had hit the right nail on the head. Further conversation was prevented by the carriage drawing up in front of Dering Court, on the steps of which stood a couple of footmen, ready to assist the two ladies to descend.

Dering Court presented a very brilliant appearance; it was lighted from garret to basement, and the spacious hall and staircase had been partially filled with huge palm and other ferns from the conservatories, which lent them a certain tropical look, hardly in accordance with the massive oak carving, and the trophies of the chase that adorned the walls.

Lord Westlynn and Lady Hawkley came forward to receive their guests in the largest of the drawing rooms—a lofty apartment, glittering with gilding and plate glass, and



white marble. It was furnished in the French style, and the mirrors, reaching from floor to ceiling, reflected in innumerable vistas the costly ormolu and gold of its decoration.

"Permit me to present you to my son—Lord Dering," said the Earl, and Hilda looked up rather bewilderedly. A minute later the Viscount had stepped aside, and Verrall stood in his place, undergoing the ceremony of introduction to the heiress.

Hilda felt her heart give a great throb, and her cheeks became hotly crimson. Verrall had instantly recognised her, but he left her the initiative of acknowledging their former acquaintance, which she did by holding out her hand.

"Captain Verrall and I have met before," she said, in explanation to Lady Hawksley, who was watching the meeting with a surprised and not exactly amiable expression.

"Indeed! I was not aware of it."

"No, how could you be?" returned the girl simply. "It was when I was a governess in London, and at the house of my pupils' parents."

The dowager frowned slightly. She did not care to be reminded of the subordinate position formerly occupied by the girl she destined for her grandson's future bride, and she was inclined to think it an affectation of humility for Hilda to allude to it.

At that moment dinner was announced, and, as there were no other guests present, the Earl gave his arm to Miss Finschert, Lord Dering followed with Evelyn, and Verrall took down Lady Hawksley.

Although the party was small, it was a particularly bright and merry one. Lord Westlynn was, *par excellence*, a society man, and made a capital host; while, if his mother-in-law was inclined to be caustic in her remarks, this fault was partly atoned for by her wit, which on this occasion was brilliant, and not quite so ill-natured as usual.

Hilda, it is true, was rather silent, for she had not completely recovered from the surprise of meeting Verrall, but Evelyn proved herself in the highest of spirits, and fully equal to the task of replying to the gay talk of the host.

Indeed, Evelyn was completely in her element, and—for the moment—entirely happy. She liked to see the dinner-table glittering with plate and cut-glass, and ornamented with hot-house plants, and miniature forests of maidenhair fern. She liked to see the footmen moving about with powdered hair and gorgeous liveries. She liked to see the champagne creaming in her glass, and, above all, she liked to feel herself one of the great world of rank and fashion, in which her cousin's kindness had given her a place.

She forgot the sordid past, when she had been glad to earn a pound a week as a "super" at a theatre. She forgot the honest love that had been given her, and that she had spurned, or if she for a moment remembered either of these things it was only to dismiss the recollection with disgust.

She was clever, in a way, and very ready with her tongue, so that she made rather a favourable impression on all—though Lady Hawksley afterwards pronounced her "vulgar," and declared she would not believe the same blood flowed through her veins and Hilda's.

The gentlemen did not linger long over their wine after the ladies had left them, but when they went to the drawing-room Verrall was somewhat surprised at Lady Hawksley beckoning him to her side.

"Come and sit down by me," she said, graciously, making room for him on the couch, "I want to talk to you for a little while."

He bowed and took the offered seat. The old lady was a puzzle to him, for while her behaviour had at first been constrained almost to rudeness, it was now perfectly friendly—nay more, familiar.

"It is a shame to keep you from the young ladies, is it not?" she said, playfully tapping his arm with her fan. "But you will have plenty

of time to talk to them afterwards, and meanwhile you are gratifying an old woman's whim. There is a little satisfaction in that, isn't there?"

"A great deal," responded Verrall. "You speak, Lady Hawksley, as if the obligation were on your side, whereas I consider it is entirely on mine."

"You are quite a courtier, Captain Verrall. At what school did you learn to pay compliments?"

"The school of nature, madam. I have had small experience of any other."

"But you went to school?"

"Oh, yes, for a few years. For the most part, however, I am self-educated."

"Indeed! Shall you think me rude if I tell you that I take a great interest in you and your early life, and that I should very much like to hear something of your schoolboy days?"

"Your interest is exceedingly kind," said the young man, but he spoke rather coldly, as if he hardly appreciated the spirit that dictated her inquiries.

Lady Hawksley was much too clever a woman not to notice the change in his tone, and her rapid intuition enabled her to guess the cause.

"I have a confession to make to you," she said, with an air of perfect candour. "When you came first I was very jealous of you on Arthur's account, and I must acknowledge that I was inclined to regard you with prejudice and disfavour, because up to the date of his intimacy with you I had always been first in Dering's affections—not second even to his father—and I naturally resented a stranger taking my place. Do you understand the feeling?"

She paused a moment for a reply, but none came, and after a swift glance at the young officer's features, which satisfied her he was listening attentively, she continued.

"I do not mind telling you that your visit made me angry, but those unworthy feelings of mine soon disappeared when I came to know you personally; and now, so far from regretting your intimacy with my grandson, I rejoice in it, for I am sure you will prove yourself as good a friend as you are a soldier. There! Have I humbled myself sufficiently to obtain your forgiveness for my former cavalier treatment?"

Verrall was really touched by her apology, which he was the more inclined to believe sincere from the fact that she could not possibly gain anything from this effort at conciliation.

That Lady Hawksley should as far condone as to beg anybody's pardon was in itself wonderful enough, but for her to take this trouble for the sake of a penniless soldier of fortune had in it something of the marvellous; and Verrall, who had no mean knowledge of human nature, may be forgiven if his first thought was to wonder what object she had in view.

A moment's reflection made him ashamed of the idea, for her motive could not possibly be other than a worthy one, prompted most likely by affection for Dering.

"Indeed, Lady Hawksley you do me too much honour. I assure you I have nothing to forgive, but if I had your words would make me forget it," he said.

"*Bien!*" exclaimed her ladyship, holding out her hand. "Then in future you will look upon me as a friend—an uninteresting one, perhaps, but none the less true on that account?"

"With pleasure, if you wish it."

"I do wish it. Now, tell me what school you were at, and how you spent your time until you entered the army. I always like to know my friends' histories, but not, I hope, from motives of vulgar curiosity."

Verrall had no reason for reticence, therefore he spoke of his boyhood without reserve, and he was too unsuspecting to notice the art with which Lady Hawksley drew from him those details that he would have omitted,

either for their triviality or through forgetfulness. No item seemed too small for the dowager's interest, and she insisted on hearing some minute particulars that it made him laugh to tell.

"Well," she said at length, as he paused, "having heard your story, and the difficulties over which you have triumphed, I am more than ever determined to prove myself your friend, and luckily I have some influence in certain quarters which may prove useful to you. I suppose if I could procure for you a good military appointment you would not object to go abroad?"

Verrall hesitated a moment.

"No, I think not," he answered.

"Then I shall try my best on your behalf. I can assure you. Now," she added, with a total change of tone, and a relapse into her old imperious manner, "I have kept you quite long enough, so I will dismiss you. Go and talk to Miss Monkton, who will no doubt entertain you better than I have done."

Evelyn laughed, and obeyed, not sorry to be dismissed.

What man in the world would not rather talk to a young woman than an old one?

Evelyn was looking over a book of photographs, rather bored than otherwise, and with an expression of countenance which she vainly strove to make amiable.

Lord Westlynn and his son were talking to Hilda about some property of hers that joined the Dering Court estates, and Evelyn felt herself neglected by being left alone. She was absurdly desirous of admiration, and never happy unless she got it.

"I see you have views of the Rhine there," said Verrall, easily, as he took the vacant chair at her side. "I was looking at them last night, and thought them wonderfully grand. Do you recognise them?"

He spoke without thinking, but Evelyn coloured uneasily at the question.

"No, I have not been on the Continent much. I have not cared to go, in fact, or I daresay I could have found opportunities. You are a great traveller, I understand?"

"I? Oh, dear no. I have been with my regiment in most of my travels. I certainly have been up the Rhine, but"—he added, laughing—"it was with Cook's excursion, and I think it cost me ten pounds."

Evelyn gave vent to a little shudder of disgust. She hated the least suggestion of poverty now that she had shaken herself free from it, and with the instinct of certain vulgar natures she was inclined to look down on all self-made men and women, while the mere fact of having been born to purple and fine linen constituted a claim to her respect. Certainly she made an exception in Verrall's favour, for his handsome face and tall manly figure had at once challenged her admiration.

"Don't talk of Cook's excursions—they are too dreadfully vulgar," she said, with a pretty little gesture of repugnance, which amused Eric, who mentally compared her affection with her cousin's simplicity. "Tell me about the battles in which you have fought. I have the greatest interest in soldiers, and if I had been a man I should certainly have gone into the army."

"It is a grand profession," exclaimed Verrall, enthusiastically, "and a grand thing to know one is fighting for one's country's honour!"

"I don't know about that. I was not thinking of the fighting when I spoke," admitted the girl, naively. "It must be so jolly to go into foreign lands and get invited out everywhere, and wear such becoming uniform!"

Verrall laughed aloud at these arguments in favour of a military career; and Hilda, as she heard him, was conscious of a slightly disagreeable sensation whose origin she did not analyse.

She thought to herself that Evelyn was looking very handsome to-night, and that Captain Verrall seemed to enjoy her society very much.

"The officers are going to give a ball at W—the week after Christmas," continued

Evelyn. "I should like to go awfully, but Hilda won't on account of Sir Herbert's death. I call it great nonsense on her part, for she knows that Sir Herbert expressly mentioned in his will his desire that no fuss of that kind should be made."

"I suppose it is a point of delicacy with your cousin," observed Eric, gravely.

"It's all nonsense if that's what you mean," irritably replied Evelyn, who was considerably put out at this decision of Hilda's; "and I call it selfish too, for if she does not care about dancing herself she should remember there are other people who do."

The bad taste of this remark was so obvious that Verrall gazed at the speaker in undisguised astonishment, but luckily, or unluckily, she did not observe his glance, for her eyes were fixed on her hands—glittering with two diamond and sapphire rings that Hilda had given her.

"I suppose you and Lord Dering are going?" she added, after a pause.

"I believe so."

"And Lady Hawksley?"

"No," responded the soldier, with a laugh. "Dering and I hardly require a chaperon, and it is only in that capacity that Lady Hawksley would be likely to go."

"Who is taking my name in vain?" quered the Dowager, who had come across, and caught the concluding portions of Verrall's sentence.

"I was telling Miss Monkton that you are not going to the officers' ball at W—."

Lady Hawksley fixed her keen eyes on the girl.

You would like to go, I suppose?" she observed.

"Yes, very much, if I could get anyone to chaperon me," boldly responded Evelyn.

Lady Hawksley seemed to consider a moment, then she said,

"I will take you under my charge if you like."

"Will you? Oh, that is indeed good! How can I express my gratitude?"

"Don't try to do so. I may ask you for a practical proof of it by-and-by," rejoined the Dowager, significantly. "I suppose Miss Fitzherbert won't object, but I will go and ask her myself."

She did so in rather strange terms, inasmuch as she made it appear that it was at Captain Verrall's request she had undertaken to chaperon Evelyn. Hilda said rather coldly that she would not interfere with her cousin's wishes, and so the matter was arranged.

"I believe we are really going to have a seasonable Christmas at last," observed Lord Westlynn, ceasing his conversation with the heiress, and addressing his guests generally. "The frost has continued so long that you young people will be able to skate to-morrow."

"Yes," said his son, "Verrall and I proposed going to Bramley Lake in the morning. It is one of the best places in the county for skating, and we shall take the sleigh, as the road is covered with snow."

"How delightful!" cried Evelyn, clasping her hands together with a slightly theatrical gesture.

"Would you care to go with us?"

"Indeed I should."

Lord Dering turned to Hilda.

"We should be charmed if you and Miss Monkton would accompany us," he said, eagerly; "I think you would enjoy the skating, for the ice will be in splendid condition."

Hilda needed no persuasion. She skated very well, and it was years since she had a chance of practising this accomplishment, so the plan doubly commended itself to her.

Presently music was asked for, and Lord Westlynn requested Hilda to sing.

"I would with pleasure, but that I have a cold, and am very hoarse. Don't laugh, Lord Westlynn," she added, laughing herself, as she observed his cynical smile; "it is not the regulation cold with which young ladies are usually afflicted when they don't want to sing,

but a *bona fide* one. My cousin, however, is not under the same disadvantage."

Evelyn at once expressed her willingness, and as she rose glanced coquettishly at Verrall.

"Will you come and find a song for me?" she said, in a low voice, "and then I will sing whichever one you select."

The young officer had no alternative but to obey, although he had been counting upon snatching a few minutes' conversation with Hilda while her cousin was at the piano. As he followed the latter he bit his lips with vexation, and was inclined to accuse Fate of having a spite against him for so persistently denying him the opportunity he longed for.

Indeed, it seemed as if this were the case, for as soon as Evelyn finished her song Miss Fitzherbert's carriage was announced, and the Earl himself escorted his guests to it.

When the two girls arrived at the Castle, Hilda would have retired on the plea of fatigue, but Evelyn, who was never particularly considerate for other people, followed her to her dressing-room.

"I have spent such a delightful evening," she exclaimed, by way of starting the conversation, "but I had no idea people of such high rank were so simple in their manner. Why, they put one at ease at once!"

To Hilda Evelyn did not trouble herself to put on airs, as she did to other people; perhaps she thought it would be useless, as her cousin would assuredly see through them, and, besides, Hilda detested any affectation whatever.

"What do you think of Captain Verrall?" she added, finding her cousin did not answer her last remark.

"Think of him," repeated the heiress, slowly, as she laid down the flowers she had just taken from her corsage, "I think he is very handsome."

She spoke the words slowly, and almost with an effort, while her hand trembled very slightly as she put the flowers in a vase of water. Evelyn was not unobservant of these signs.

"He paid me a good deal of attention, did he not?" she said, with a tone of consciousness in her voice.

"Not more than men usually pay to ladies they take in to dinner," replied the heiress, coldly.

"You think not! Ah, but then you did not hear what he said, or the way in which he said it. Well, I am not ashamed to declare that I am very much inclined to fall in love with him—if I have not done so already."

"Is not your declaration a little premature?" asked our heroine, with the nearest approach to satire she ever permitted herself.

"Not from me to you, surely! Are we not cousins—almost sisters, and do I not tell you everything, even to my inmost thoughts?" demanded Evelyn, tenderly.

Hilda felt half ashamed of her hasty speech.

"Forgive me, dear, if I was cross. I am very tired, and, although it sounds ungracious, I should be very glad if you would leave me, so that I could go to bed."

Evelyn kissed her and then went to her own room, but she made no attempt to retire, for she was a little excited with the events of the evening, unsensational as they were, and she wanted to think over them.

"Hilda is in love with Captain Verrall," she said at length, half audibly; "I don't think she knows it herself yet, but it is true all the same. Suppose he should prefer me! What a humiliation it would be to her and what a triumph for me!"

This unworthy thought pursued her, and she could not get rid of it. Personally, she did not dislike her cousin, or rather, it would be more correct to say, she would not have disliked her had their relative positions been reversed; but she was very jealous of Hilda's wealth, and the idea was constantly haunting her that things were unfairly divided in this

world, otherwise she would have been an heiress as well.

She did not deny that Hilda was as kind and good to her as she possibly could be, and that she willingly shared all the pleasures her wealth gave her power to command; but in spite of this there was, of course, a marked difference in the way the two cousins were treated by other people, and this difference Evelyn bitterly resented. Her domineering and masterful spirit would brook no rival, and if she did not hate Hilda herself she hated her as mistress of the Castle.

The distinction may seem a subtle one, but it will be easily understood by those having the key to Evelyn's character, as will also her desire to rival Hilda in the affections of a chosen lover.

CHAPTER X.

THE next day proved as fine as could be expected. The thermometer still registered a temperature below zero, but the sun shone as brightly, if not as warmly, as in July, and the sky was one wide dome of unflecked blue. In the air was that keen freshness that brings with it a distinct sense of exhilaration—like a strong breeze blowing from the pine-clad heights of a lofty mountain.

Early in the forenoon the party from the Court arrived in a large sleigh, to which were harnessed a couple of horses, whose necks were adorned with bells that tinkled musically as the animals trotted swiftly along the snowy ground. Lord Westlynn had accompanied the two young men, but he laughingly apologised for his presence.

"I had business with a man who lives some distance beyond Bramley Pond," he said, "so I thought I might as well enjoy your company as far as I could."

He was looking admiringly at Hilda, who did, indeed, present a charming picture in her dark green velvet dress, with its trimmings of silver fox fur, and its coquettish little cap. He thought what a lovely countess she would make, and told himself he did not wish for a fairer bride for his son.

Arthur, however, did not make so much of the opportunity as he might have done, for although he talked to both cousins, his attention did not seem to be altogether with his words, and he let slip chances of paying compliments of which the Earl, had he been in his place, would most assuredly have availed himself.

Bramley Pond wore a very inviting appearance to skaters; the snow had been carefully swept off it, and now it presented a perfectly smooth surface of silvery blue ice, which shone like crystal as the sun's rays fell upon it.

Directly their skates were fastened on the two girls started off, and Hilda was soon seen skimming like a bird along the farther end of the lake, and as much at home as if she had been on terra firma.

Evelyn was less successful. She stumbled, and would have slipped had not Arthur, who happened to be nearer than Verrall, offered his aid.

"I am not quite used to it yet—it is such a long time since I was on the ice," she gasped in excuse, clinging desperately to his arm the while. "I—oh, dear!—I am sure I shall fall."

"No you won't, if you only hang on to me," said the Viscount, hardly able to help laughing at her piteous face, although he was rather annoyed at the prospect of having to uphold her all the time instead of enjoying a skim across the ice on his own behalf. Noticing Hilda in the distance he said to Verrall, "You had better go and look after Miss Fitzherbert, Eric. I don't quite like the idea of her being alone up there, although I believe the pond is safe enough."

Verrall started off immediately, and soon came up level with Hilda, who was already "cutting figures."

"I have been commissioned to take care of you, Miss Fitzherbert," he observed, "and I

need not say how delighted I was to undertake the task, although it seems to me that my office will be a sinecure, for you are as much at home on the ice as a duck is in water."

"It is kind of you all the same," smiled the heiress, whose cheeks were flushed, and eyes radiant with the exercise, "my cousin does not seem to get on quite so well."

"No; but you need have no apprehensions on her account as Dering is looking after her."

Thus satisfied, Hilda yielded herself entirely to the enjoyment of the moment, and she and Verrall skated together until at length she declared herself tired.

"I think I shall get up the bank, and sit down for a few minutes," she said; and, with Verrall's assistance, put her design into execution, finding a seat on the felled trunk of a tree.

The officer stood beside her, one foot resting on the timber.

"I have not yet had an opportunity of offering you my congratulations, Miss Fitzherbert," he said, in a low voice, after a few minutes' silence. "Will you permit me to do so now?"

"On what?" demanded Hilda, opening her eyes. A minute later she added, with a slight laugh, "Do you mean on my change of fortune?"

He bowed without speaking.

"Yes, I suppose I am a very lucky girl, or at least everybody thinks so," she observed, thoughtfully. "Still I fancy I feel almost as lonely as ever I did."

He looked at her inquiringly, and she blushed as though she had been betrayed into saying more than she intended.

"And yet you, of all the women I know, would seem to have the best right to be happy!"

The observation broke from him involuntarily, but he told himself afterwards he had no business to have uttered it, for it was a sort of speech that argued more familiarity than he was justified in using towards her.

She, however, did not seem to resent it.

"I think happiness is a comparative term," she replied, half-musing. "There are so few people who are really happy."

"You are young to have made that discovery, maiden," said a voice behind her, which had the effect of startling her and Verrall, for they, neither of them, had the slightest idea of anyone being near.

Looking round simultaneously they saw a tall, commanding figure, dressed in a long brown cloak, and having a gaily-coloured handkerchief bound round the head instead of a bonnet.

It would have been difficult to guess the woman's age, for her complexion was very dark, and the fiery expression of her black eyes, which might have argued youth, was partly contradicted by the locks of grey hairs that straggled across her forehead.

She looked fixedly at both, then said,—

"Let me tell you your fortunes, my pretty lady and gentleman. The stars have sung me their song, and I will repeat it to you if you will cross my hand with silver."

Hilda drew back rather frightened, and the gipsy—if gipsy she was—observed the movement.

"You are afraid of your heart's secrets being known, pretty one!" she exclaimed, quickly. "But you need not be, for it is a pure and good heart, and men have but to look in your eyes to see it is a modest one."

"I am afraid of nothing of the sort," declared the young girl, "but I do not wish to hear my fortune, as you call it."

"Would you not pierce the veil that shrouds the future from your gaze?"

"Indeed no!"

The gipsy laughed—and, strange to say, the laugh was a particularly musical one.

"If Eve had been of your opinion, my beautiful lady, we might all of us have been in Paradise still. Do you know?"—she looked from Hilda to Verrall—"that Paradise yet

exists on earth, and that it is given to all of us to enter its gates, at least once in our lives?"

They did not reply, but both seemed interested in this strange apparition, who looked like a gipsy, and spoke like an educated woman.

"Shall I tell you when that once is?" she continued, in a melancholy tone. "It is when a man and woman love each other, and confess their love, but it is of short duration—a few moments, and the gates shut, and the glimpse is over. There is yet another Paradise than the one of which I speak, and men call it the Paradise of Fools."

She paused again, and, whether by accident or design, regarded Verrall very intently. His eyes fell under the eagerness of hers, and she smiled.

"You know what that Paradise is like, young man, for you have been in it—nay, are in it still perhaps," she said, with a malice that seemed more playful than vindictive. "Well, bad days are coming for you, as they come for us all. Let me see your hand."

She snatched it up, and bent down to look at it.

"Aye—Passion and Folly and their consequences—golden apples that looked so tempting, and turned to dead sea fruit between the teeth—dust and ashes—dust and ashes!" she muttered, in a low monotone. "The sins of the fathers visited on the children from generation to generation." Suddenly her tone changed. "You have earned your fortune with your own hand in the past, and the future shall reward you, but before you reach the goal you must pass through the waters of tribulation, which are indeed bitter to the taste. Have I not told you truth?"

In effect Verrall had been more startled by her words than he would have cared to confess, but he laughed lightly in answer to her question.

"I suppose you have told me the generalities of your profession usually—utter to those who consult them," he returned.

His words seemed to make her angry.

"Would you have me more particular in what I say?" she exclaimed. "Well, then, do not blame me if you wince under the truth. Shall I tell you that there is a love in your heart, which sprang up in a single night, and has taken such deep root that, try as you will, you cannot kill it? Shall I tell you that it is an ambitious love, that its object is beautiful, that she—"

"Stop, stop!" cried Verrall, jumping up in his excitement and fear. "Take this, and go!"

He held out a florin, but she pushed it impudently to one side and turned to Hilda,—

"I have a message, and I must give it," she said, in a tone of deep melancholy. "In the fairest bud a canker gnaws at the heart, and in thy pure soul a seed is sown, destined to bring forth pain and misery. Thou art the last of thy race, and the shadow of a crime hangs over thee,—

"When a ring dove sits in the eagle's nest,
And the last of the knights is gone to his rest,
Then let her beware
Of treachery's snare,
For blood shall be spilt,
And a woman's the guilf!"

As she pronounced the last words she waved her hand and disappeared amongst the trees at the back of the place where they sat, leaving Hilda and Verrall staring at each other in undisguised amazement. The former was very pale.

"I hope she has not alarmed you," he said, anxiously. "You must remember she is only a charlatan, and makes her living by talking rubbish, into which it is necessary she should introduce a semblance of truth."

Hilda pointed significantly to the florin, which lay on the ground at her feet.

"That does not look like charlatanism, does it? Besides, how did she know who I was,

and that curious verse, which is a legend of our race?"

The officer did not reply, for he himself was as much puzzled as annoyed at what had taken place. Hilda looked at him, a slow colour mounting to her cheek.

"You must confess that if what she said was guesswork, it very cleverly hit on the truth."

"Yes," he muttered; "it did, indeed."

Hilda turned away abruptly, and plucked with nervous fingers at the lichen that clung to the bark of the tree on which she sat.

She was not superstitious by nature, but it would be vain to deny that the gipsy's words had made a great impression on her—an impression that was naturally heightened by the solemn manner in which they had been spoken. Perhaps she heeded less what had been said to her than what had been said to her companion, for she had been keen-sighted enough to know that the sibyl's declaration of a "love that sprang up in a single night" had touched a vulnerable point in the young man's armour, and it was for this reason he had so impulsively bade her be silent.

Had he been afraid lest the name of the woman he loved should be revealed?

Hilda thought so, and a curious pain went through her heart, for she remembered what Evelyn had said the preceding evening, and how attentive Verrall had been to her in Lord Westlyn's drawing-room. Putting these circumstances together she came to the conclusion that the lady referred to could be no other than her cousin, whose beauty had had an immediate effect on the young soldier.

Well, Hilda said to herself, ought she not to feel glad at the prospect which seemed to open out a happy future for the two young people? They were neither of them rich, but she was, and it would be a delight to her to give Evelyn a dowry which would enable them to live comfortably, if not in affluence.

All the same, the faint, sick pain at her heart grew keener; for she had never had a "love affair" in her life, and was as innocent as a child in such matters. She tried her best to control it, but her voice was a little tremulous as she rose.

"Let us go on the ice again, and join the others—I have rested long enough now."

Verrall silently obeyed, and a few minutes later they were by the side of Evelyn and Lord Dering.

"I am getting on splendidly, and enjoying myself immensely," declared the former, who, flushed and smiling, really looked very handsome, "I almost think I could get along by myself now."

"Better not try, Miss Monkton," advised Arthur, who had considerable doubts on the point.

"But I am selfish in keeping you from skating."

"Oh, I don't mind at all, I assure you," said the Viscount, whose looks, however, belied his words.

"Allow me to take Lord Dering's place for awhile," interposed Verrall, reading his friend's expression aright, and offering his hand, which Evelyn at once took.

They remained together for the rest of the morning, until Lord Westlyn's reappearance in the sleigh was the signal for returning home.

When they were on their way back, Verrall asked the Earl if there was a gipsy encampment anywhere about the neighbourhood, and received a negative for a reply.

"Are you sure?" he said.

"Quite. This is an uncongenial soil for gypsies, and they know it, and keep out of the way. Some time ago one of their tribe had a row with a keeper, and it ended by the keeper being killed. The gipsy was tried, convicted of murder, and sentenced to be hung, but somehow a reprieve was obtained for him, and he was condemned to penal servitude for life. Since that time there have been no encampments within a radius of fifteen miles, and I am sure there is

not one now, or I should know of it. Why do you ask?"

"Because Miss Fitzherbert and myself were accosted by a person who certainly looked like a member of the Romany tribe."

"Really!" exclaimed Evelyn, with an appearance of much interest. "Did she tell you your fortunes?"

"She talked a lot of rubbish," replied the young man, uneasily. "Pray don't ask me what she said, for I assure you it would not bear repetition."

"What sort of a woman was she?" queried the Earl.

"Rather a melodramatic kind of person, who spoke in a cultured manner, and was not oblivious of her h's."

"Indeed!" remarked Lord Westlynn, surprised. "Are you quite sure she was a gipsy?"

That was just the question Eric was asking himself, and to which he was unable to find a satisfactory answer.

If she was not a gipsy, who was she?

(To be continued.)

CHILDREN IN WINTER.

The maintenance of body temperature is an exceedingly important matter, and it is influenced markedly by the following circumstances, viz., the state of the body, that is, whether at rest or active. Second, the food and clothing of the invalid; and lastly, the temperature of the atmosphere of the place in which the invalid is. Now, although the influence of muscular activity on the body temperature is not very marked, yet it is appreciable, for of a cold morning all instinctively quicken their pace, and doubtless all know well that a person who is exposed to severe cold will perish very much more quickly if he lie down than if he keep moving. For these reasons, then, some indoor employment should be provided for the children, even if it is no more than tossing a soft ball about the house.

It is very generally, and doubtless correctly, believed that fat foods are of much assistance in maintaining the body temperature. It must appear, then, that such food is especially desirable in winter. The same is true, indeed, of heated substances, generally. Soups, mush and milk, and chocolate for drinking are prime articles for winter diet. A little butter and sugar added to the mush and milk, when it is about to be eaten, will, probably, cause some to take it who otherwise would not. Fruit, raw or cooked, used occasionally with the morning meal, is also very beneficial. It is probable that if the food of the day were given at four meals the child would receive more benefit from it than from the same food given at three meals, necessarily at longer intervals.

Woollen clothing generally is the best; for outer garments the material known as lady's cloth would probably do very well. Mitts and leggings are very important, for with cold hands and feet it is hardly possible for the body generally to be comfortable. Taking the children out is a very essential and much neglected matter. Boisterous winds and outdoor temperature of less than twenty-five degrees makes it necessary that a sheltered spot shall be sought for the airing; if, however, it is impossible to do as here suggested, and the little folks must remain in the house day after day, let them be kept in the sunny room of the house, and if the house happens to have no sunny room in it, remember this, and when changing get a house with at least one sunny room.

One shilling invested in a thermometer to hang in the room in which the children are kept will be a very good investment. For the sitting-room a temperature of seventy degrees would do very well; in the sleeping-room a temperature of ten degrees less than that just mentioned would be right. When the rooms become too warm admit the outer air by lowering the window sash one inch from the top, and raising it the same from the bottom. Drafts of air through any apartment are very undesirable.

SWEETHEART AND TRUE.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

"Oh, villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! unnatural, detested, and brutal villain!"

MR. DRAYCOT pauses once more to allow his foregone speech to take due effect.

No one attempts to speak or interrupt him, for each with different feelings knows that the crisis of discovery is slowly and surely approaching.

At last the lawyer looks straight across the writing-table to where Miss Rebecca Daunt sits rigid, erect, with compressed mouth and hard expression.

She has hitherto been, as it were, disregarded in the discussion. No one has appealed to her, or has she as yet been in any way called upon to break that hard, uncompromising silence which she has steadfastly maintained since her brother entered the library. But her turn has come.

"I believe, Miss Daunt, that you wrote to your brother a private letter, unknown to your sister-in-law living with you, about the young lady under your care, to the effect that she, being about to become a mother, what provision should be made for the birth of a child, did you not?" Mr. Draycot inquires of the gaunt figure in the high-backed oak seat opposite.

Then the grim lips unclose for the first time.

"Yes," she answers, coldly. "I did write such a letter as you describe."

Stephen shoots a swift glance at his sister as she speaks—a glance of surprise and displeasure. He cannot understand her set affirmation to the lawyer's query at all, and quite expected to have heard her deny any such proceeding on her part at once without delay or hesitation.

"What can she mean by it?" he wonders, angrily.

"Thank you, Miss Daunt," says the lawyer with emphasis, as if until this moment he had not been sure of her coalition, and was now glad to find she intended to abide by the bargain made between them, and thus obviate any unnecessary dragging out of an interview painful to all concerned. "Wonderfully do things happen sometimes in the cause of evil; but, strangely enough, on the very morning that this letter reached your brother at Marleswood, terrible tidings came to Sir Gordon. A telegram arrived, announcing the death of his son Chester out in India. There had been a raid on some insurgents from Candahar, and he had been assassinated by an ambush with others of his troop. I need not say that the news was a most terrible shock to Sir Gordon. He seemed utterly heartbroken, for he really loved his only son, and they had not parted upon the usual affectionate terms. At that time Sir Gordon would have pardoned anything and everything to that dead son, and would have taken the poor bereaved young wife to his heart and home with affection and welcome."

"Yes, I would have freely forgiven Chester everything had I known, but I did not," murmurs the old Baronet, regretfully.

"No; Sir Gordon never knew of that young wife's existence," pursues Mr. Draycot, "or that there would be a baby heir to Marleswood if it lived, in place of the man who now stepped in to enjoy a position as yet not rightfully his own, and whom he naturally believed to be the legal heir to the estate. According to your account, Miss Daunt, your brother appeared at your small seaside home on receipt of your letter, did he not?"

"Yes; he came at my request," again comes briefly from the compressed lips.

Stephen looks at his sister incomprehensibly; but she stares straight before her into space, and does not return his angry gaze.

"And the result of his coming was that you, your sister-in-law Mrs. Stephen Daunt,

and the delicate young wife moved from your home to a tiny cottage far away on the Cornish moors—such move being undertaken to prevent a knowledge of your whereabouts, and ensure a secrecy and concealment of events. Am I right in saying this?"

Miss Daunt nods in a jerky kind of way.

"Perfectly!" she responds, shortly.

This time Stephen unmistakably glares at her, but remains silent, thinking it more politic, for the present, at any rate, to say nothing than inveigh against his sister's unwelcome candour, where duplicity was necessary.

He cannot make signs to her, for the simple reason that she never once looks at him, or even in his direction; therefore it is hopeless to try and catch her eye.

It slowly dawns upon his understanding that his amiable sister does not stand in need of his guidance, or is desirous of courting it in any way.

"Unfortunately at this period of the history," says Mr. Draycot, with emphasis—"I may say, most unfortunately—Sir Hubert Chichester was away from Seize Court. He, with his wife and little son, had gone on a yachting tour, and because no one precisely knew his whereabouts, it became an impossible to communicate to him the sudden news of his best friend's death. Sir Gordon himself told Sir Hubert on his return to Seize Court, mourning the terrible loss of his dear son with great grief and sorrow. There was another event which had happened during that absence," adds the lawyer, more slowly, "and which Sir Hubert had to be informed of on his return home. It came to him through Mr. Stephen Daunt. Sir Hubert, may I call upon you to state the substance of that other information as nearly as possible in the same words as it was given to you?"

The younger baronet advances a pace or two from the massive fireplace, and nearer to the lawyer.

"I was told by Mr. Daunt," he began, with forcible diction, "that while on a little quiet rambling in Cornwall with his sister, who always took some small holiday away from her home every year, the young lady, Miss Olive Lyster, whom I had placed under that sister's care, had been prematurely delivered of a little girl, and that both mother and child had died at the birth; adding that his sister had done everything in her power to save the mother's life, but in vain; and that under the circumstances he thought the child's death a most happy termination, which must be eminently satisfactory to myself. I knew what he meant to infer, the scoundrel! but I took no notice of his innuendo," with disgusted expression. "Mr. Daunt told me what I have just said, and he showed me the certificate of the deaths of both mother and babe!"

There is a distinct and level pause, then Mr. Draycot says,—

"And of course you believed this information to be all correct, Sir Hubert?"

"Naturally I did. Who would not have done so in my place? And then the certificate, properly signed and all in due form, was, to my mind, proof positive, not to be doubted for a moment. It seemed a very sad affair, this death of both husband and wife within such a short space of one another, and I must honestly confess that the knowledge of the child's decease at its birth was a great relief to me in one sense; for had it lived I should have been obliged to inform Sir Gordon of his son's marriage, and proved the child's legality and kinship—a proceeding which would have been infinitely painful to me, to have to notify a son's deceit to a grieving father, who was thinking of that dead son with only loving feelings and regret. As things stood it seemed to me to be far better to let the whole matter rest in peaceful oblivion, buried with the two poor things who, in death, had been once again united. If opening a wound in his heart, by telling Sir Gordon, would have benefited anybody, my duty would have impelled me to do so without any further thought, but it would

not. I did not even consider it necessary to undeceive, as I thought, Mr. Daunt, as to who Miss Olive Lyster really was, lest he should try and make capital out of his knowledge, and cast a stain on my dead friend's memory to the father. Little did I dream that he already knew what I kept from him, and had used it to his own vile ends," Sir Hubert finishes, with keenest scorn.

"No blame can attach to you in any way," answers Mr. Draycot; "you only acted as any man of honour would act by a dead friend. I am sure Sir Gordon acknowledges it."

"Yes! I do, indeed," says the old Baronet, earnestly, "for what he did to help my son, and protect my granddaughter's mother"—laying one hand on Olive's—"I now thank him with all my heart."

"I think, Sir Hubert, that your share in this history goes no farther. From the time you speak of, until a few days back, I believe, as far as you were concerned, nothing disturbed that buried past, or caused you to see in Mr. Stephen Daunt a usurper and a miserable schemer?" goes on the lawyer once more.

"Nothing, Mr. Draycot. I have remained absolutely undisturbed in mind until these few days back," is the answer.

"And then we hear a strange thing," asserts Mr. Draycot, slowly, looking round him, "something that startles our quiet, and rakes up the buried past. We hear, that though the young wife of Chester Bruce did, indeed, die at the birth of her child, *the babe lived!*—lived and thrived! Therefore the certificate of its birth was a *forgery!*"

A leaden pallor slowly creeps over the swart face of the figure standing with folded arms and defiant attitude.

The chain is nearly round and about him now. The cursed memory of that poor creature, his wife, has not played her false as he had hoped it might do even at the last, and which caused him to keep silence, lest he should criminate himself unawares. He feels he could strike her down where she stands, near the window, if he only dared. After twenty years of expectancy, to lose what he sinned to gain, was maddening, and he writhed in impotent fury.

All his evil-doing was being brought home to him; each link of the chain he imagined he had severed so cleverly in that past was being joined to the rest, to form a complete whole, and prove him everything that was bad. He tried to make one final struggle to fight.

"Bah!" he says, with a kind of savage snarl. "Do you think to frighten me—to make me cringe and grovel at your feet? Because you all err if you do. I say that your whole accusation is a concoction among you to wrest the succession of Marleswood after Sir Gordon's death from me, its legal future owner; and I defy you to prove the certificate was a forgery."

It is mere idle bravado that he speaks, and he himself knows it. He knows it can be proved by time and search, and with such remembrance of place and things as can evidently be supplied by his wife. That the child's life from its birth can be traced out year by year if necessary now that the outlines of the plot are laid bare, and thus prove him a villain.

Mr. Draycot takes no immediate notice of the defiance, but says calmly to the woman by the window,—

"Mrs. Daunt, will you tell us what happened in that lonely little cottage whence, by your husband's command, you, your sister-in-law, and young Mrs. Bruce had moved? What excuse was made for that removal?"

"My sister-in-law's health, which needed a warmer air than the east coast; and, of course, our boarder accompanied us. She, poor dear, needed a warmer climate more than my sister-in-law, for as the time went on she seemed to fade and droop more like a flower than ever. Anyway, she went gladly enough.

Just before her baby was born she said to me one day when we were sitting together in the garden,—

"Janet, I am going to tell you something which no one knows but Sir Hubert Chichester. You must promise to keep it a secret, unless—unless I should die."

"Dear, do not talk about dying!" I answered her.

"I sometimes think I shall die when my baby is born," she said again, in a dreamy kind of fashion. "And in case I should die, you must promise to do something for me. I know I can trust you, dear Janet, though they do say unkind things about you, and that you are only a poor lunatic; but you are always good and kind to me. I do not believe it is true. You know I think I am a little afraid of Miss Daunt and her brother. They are so stern and cold-mannered, and when they look at one with their black eyes, I feel a sort of shudder as I used to feel when I saw a snake. Sir Hubert wished me to come to Miss Daunt, and that I should be better with them than anyone else; but, all the same, I am a tiny bit afraid of them I believe. I know that it must seem odd my being here as I am, but—but I am not what you all think me, Janet; I am not indeed."

I answered her that I was glad with all my heart that she had come to us. To me she had been like a sunbeam, and I did not care what she was—I loved her. They might call me mad if they chose, but she might trust me never to betray anything she wished me to keep secret, or divulge any confidence. They might tear me limb from limb, but they should not get it from me, unless she wished.

"It is not always going to be a secret from everyone, dear Janet. Only for a little time—a few more months. I must bear everything until then, until my—my beloved husband returns to me."

"Then she told me all the story of her marriage, and how her husband had been everything in the world to her, she having no one but him.

"But, you see, I cannot be certain when he will come; if he should be kept in India, and my baby will soon be born! If it is a girl it is to be named after me—Olive Lyster; if a boy after my darling husband; remember that, Janet. I tell you because I must tell some one before I am taken ill. And if I die I want you to take this little iron box to Sir Hubert Chichester. It holds the certificate of my marriage out in India, and my wedding-ring. Hide the box, so that Miss Daunt does not find it; I do not wish them to know yet. Of course when my husband returns, and I live, it will not matter. Nothing will matter to me when I have him. He would not let go back to India with him, for the doctors told him I should die out there; perhaps it will be all the same here. If I get well I shall ask you for the box again. It is only to prevent Miss Daunt seeing it. I think she has tried to pry into my things, only I have nothing but this little box that could tell her anything. Will you do what I ask, dear Janet?" she ended, coaxingly.

"I told her that I would do anything in the world for her gladly and thankfully, that she had thought me worthy enough to be made her confidante. Also that she must not think she was going to die. It could do her no good to have thoughts like that—that I felt sure she was going to live for very great happiness in the future. 'Pray Heaven I may!' I remember her saying, thoughtfully, as I took the little iron box, only about four inches square, from her hand."

"I believe you hid that box as soon as you possibly could, did you not, Mrs. Daunt?" says Mr. Draycot, questioningly.

"Yes. I hid it securely and safely from all prying eyes. I had no great faith in my sister-in-law's sense of honour, for I knew she had tried to discover all about our pretty young boarder as far as she was able from the first. She was well paid, otherwise I do not

think she would have been as agreeable to her as she was—in a grim fashion. I had no safe hiding-place from her myself, none I could trust, so I buried it one night at the foot of a Cornish oak, a stunted, low-growing tree at the bottom of the garden.

"It had an old knotted trunk and great moss-covered roots. I dug down by these roots under the moss and lichen, and laid the box there, carefully covering it over again. I knew no one would dream of looking for it in such a spot. Well, very soon after this the baby was born, and the dear young mother's words came true, for she died," ends Janet Daunt, with lowered voice.

"You communicated that death immediately on its taking place to your brother, Miss Daunt, from what I gather?" asks the lawyer of the rigid figure opposite him.

"Yes, I did," with brevity.

"With the result that he came at once to arrange about a burial, &c.?"

Miss Rebecca nodded a "yes" once more.

"Tell us, if you please, Mrs. Daunt, what took place after your husband's arrival."

"You must know that a woman from a village had come in to see after the baby, for my sister-in-law knew little of a baby's ways, and she would not let me care for it by myself."

"Well, when my husband came into the room one morning, after the pretty young mother had been laid away in her grave, he took the baby from its cradle—we were alone in the room, mind—and laid it in my arms, saying scoffingly at the same time, 'There is a baby for you, Janet; you have often wanted one, there it is. You can call it your own if you like to do so; I shall not say you may; in fact, I give it you as a present.'

"It was a heartless kind of thing to say, but then I knew my husband had no heart; I found that out very soon after my marriage. 'No, Stephen,' I answered, holding the tiny thing close to me, 'this baby can never belong to me, and it is not yours to give. Its place is not with us in the future, but with its own kith and kin.'

"'What do you mean, you mad thing?' he said, again. He sometimes called me that when I displeased him, for he knew it aggravated me and raised bad blood in my heart, 'what do you mean by kith and kin? This little base-born brat is a nonentity in the world, I assure you. You can keep it with safety, there is none to hinder you. Such things as this have no kith and kin, you poor fool!' 'It is not base-born,' I answered, as quick as thought. 'How do you know it is not base-born? what could you know about it, a mad thing like you?' he asked me, mockingly. 'I know more than you, at any rate, you and Rebecca both. I know that it has a father out in India, Mr. Chester Bruce, and a grandfather at Marleswood, Sir Gordon Bruce. I possess the certificate of the mother's marriage, which she gave me to give to Sir Hubert Chichester in case she died. I promised her I would, and I mean to do it.'

"He stared at me with the most extraordinary expression on his face for a minute, then he said, 'What curious tale have you got hold of now, Janet? Is it a new coinage of your extremely fertile brain? It sounds like it, I must confess, and I for one don't believe a single syllable of it. A certificate of marriage! Bah! you dreamt it, my good woman, you dreamt it!' 'Sir Hubert will not call it a dream when he sees it,' I returned, more calmly.

"He looked at me again with the same expression, then he said, 'To prove your own story, where is this same certificate of marriage?' 'That is my business,' was my cautious answer. 'I do not intend to tell you; it goes into no hands from mine but Sir Hubert's. It is a sacred promise, which I mean to perform when he comes back.'

"He waited a little after I had spoken, then he says, carelessly, as if the matter was of no real importance, 'Very well, since you are so determined about this affair so be it.' Sir

Hubert is away, will be away, I think, some time. Of course, if you really have this paper and made a promise about it, perform it by all means. I certainly cannot understand such a thing being possible myself. Miss Olive Lyster was placed with Rebecca as Miss Lyster, and I conclude it to be a fact, until I see very strong and conclusive evidence to the contrary. I fear your certificate is a myth, Janet, a veritable nightmare."

"He said no more, but for all his pretended disbelief I know those two watched me like a cat does a mouse to find out where I had hidden what I had told Stephen I possessed; and they searched every nook and corner of that little cottage unavailingly.

"At the end of a week my husband began one evening in a smooth voice and fairly amiable manner. 'Listen, Janet, if you really possess a certificate as you say, you had better entrust it to me to deliver to Sir Hubert Chichester on his return. I am the proper person to do it, and not you.' 'No,' I returned, doggedly; 'none gives it to Sir Hubert but myself. I mean to fulfil my promise to the dead.' 'You fool! you idiot! you have not got it,' he broke out, angrily. 'If you are so sure of that, why did you and Rebecca take all the trouble to look for it then?' I asked him, ironically. 'You shall tell me,' he went on, seizing my arm and holding it in an iron grip. 'Tell me at once, this instant, where you have hidden it, you devil!' violently shaking me till I felt my head whirl and throb again. 'I will not,' I gasped out, 'I will never tell you.' Then in a perfect tempest and frenzy of passion he struck me a heavy blow. I remember feeling crushed, staggering and falling against the granite mantelpiece, while something seemed to crack suddenly in my brain. I believe I had a fit.

"How long it lasted, or what time elapsed between that and a return to consciousness of surrounding objects, I cannot tell. One thing I know now, that when I did so return memory had gone. To me the past was a blank, and I lived only in a dazed, dreamy present, which told me no tales of what had gone before. I remembered nothing; memory was dead."

"The shock and excitement had been too much for you, Mrs. Daunt," puts in Mr. Draycot, at the woman ceases to speak.

"Yes. I lived on harmless enough, my sole pleasure the baby, which grew and thrived. We two were inseparable, and they let me be with the child. I think their idea was it kept me quiet, but all the time the sight of it brought me back no recollection. Sometimes I experienced a dim sense of wanting to remember something that I could not, but it soon faded again from my mind. I believe they consulted some doctor about me, and whatever he said made them decide upon shutting me up. Perhaps he had told them I was not a hopeless case, and they were afraid my memory might come back and spoil their evil plans. Anyway, I was easily disposed of, and shut up in a private madhouse abroad, in a lonely place near Havre. I knew where I was going. They told me mockingly how mad I was, and how I was going to live with others of my kind. Then I strove to think about things, to reassess the balance of my mind. Alas! all in vain, and the madhouse became my home. But after many years thoughts began to trouble me. My brain seemed to get clearer, gradually and surely, and I began to remember. Slowly sanity came back to me. Then I planned my escape, got over to England—to Cornwall. I went to that little cottage on the moor, after finding the woman who had nursed the tiny babe. It stood untouched by time. There, too, was the Cornish oak, with its bichen-covered roots. I dug down and unburied my treasure; it had lain safe and unharmed for twenty years almost, and I carried it straight to Sir Hubert Chichester, to whom I related all the past. Thus I kept my promise to the dead!" ended Janet, rais-

ing her faded eyes heavenwards, as if she thus sought a smile from above.

There is a silence in the room, deep and profound.

"So finishes the history," says Mr. Draycot, at length, "and you stand there a felon, Mr. Stephen Daunt. What have you to say for yourself?"

"That you have no witnesses," comes hoarsely from his pallid lips.

"Pardon me, but on the contrary we have a very excellent witness in the person of Miss Rebecca Daunt, sitting opposite me," says Mr. Draycot, indicating the lady in question with a motion of his hand towards her.

"My sister!" Stephen snarls, looking at her as if he could murder her where she sits.

"Yes, your sister!" puts in Miss Daunt, with precision; turning her head and returning her brother's gaze for the first time. "I decline being your tool any longer. My future has been guaranteed to me, therefore your promised reward goes for nothing, which in any case would be nil now. And I am prepared to swear that everything which has been said here this morning is perfectly true, on my solemn oath. I always thought it might end like this. If my time were to come over again I should refuse to share such a secret. You must own that when you broached the idea of marrying the girl, so that, should any thing ever come to light you would have a hold on Marleswood, I tried to dissuade you, though I eventually helped you to it, as I have helped you all through. But that is over, and I distinctly decline to be your tool any more."

"Which means that you are traitor, that you have sold me for some money advantage, of course?" rages Stephen, furiously.

"Allow me to place the matter in its true light. Miss Rebecca Daunt has been pleased to accept an annuity for the term of her natural life from Sir Gordon Bruce," puts in Mr. Draycot, at this juncture. "She is so far not traitor to you, as that it was only after a great deal of persuasion and promise of such annuity that she was induced to allow herself to be called upon as a witness. I own a valuable one—still we could have done without her had we been pushed to such a course. In her decision she has acted wisely, and shown extreme sound sense. I beg to congratulate her."

"And that other thing!" Stephen goes on, with contemptuous malice, pointing a finger at Janet, while his eyes seem to burn with vicious rage; "that wretched creature, my wife. What of her? Where does she go, what is to be done for her reward?" But stay, I forgot, I need not ask that question. Since she acknowledges herself my wife she must be subservient to my will. Where I go she must go if I choose. Oh! sweet, angelic wife of mine, what a paradise on earth your future life shall be with your fond and adoring husband! Come, we will go together, my beloved," and he advances a step or two nearer towards her with the intention of seizing her arm.

"Your wife is not going with you," interposes Mr. Draycot; "she will remain here at Marleswood under Sir Gordon's protection, who charges himself with her guardianship henceforth. You will not be allowed to make a paradise of her future life. She has suffered enough from you already."

"She'll go!" is the furious answer. "My wife must come! I insist upon her coming!"

"To prison with you?" remarks Mr. Draycot, significantly. "No, I think not. You have rendered yourself liable to a criminal prosecution for forgery. You cannot take your wife to prison with you, and if you do not accept such terms as are offered you most certainly you will find yourself there, and very soon too! But Sir Gordon will generously forego prosecution on the sole condition that you leave England immediately, and remain abroad. He is prepared to give you a cheque for one hundred pounds for your passage and other expenses. Not that he

thinks you need money, for you have probably taken good care to feather your own nest pretty considerably during your sojourn at Marleswood. Still, there it is. Do you accept?" and Mr. Draycot lays a slip of paper on the table; it is a cheque for one hundred pounds.

Stephen Daunt unfolds his arms, advances to the table, takes up the cheque, folds it in two and places it in his breast-pocket, buttoning his coat over it. Then he goes darkly round the room.

"Yes," he says, slowly, with sneering lips: "I have played a losing game, and I accept. Oh! charming group, good-bye, all of you! I hope I may never see any of you, cursed faces again!"

"We all heartily reciprocate your amiable wish, Mr. Daunt," returns Mr. Draycot, quietly. "Your hat is in the hall, I think. Allow me the pleasure of opening the door for you!" and walking towards it as he speaks setting it wide open.

Stephen takes a few steps towards it, and then stops short.

"Farewell, Sir Gordon Bruce," he begins, with an elaboration of sarcastic politeness in his voice and a world of malice in his black eyes. "May you find your charming granddaughter all you could wish. Farewell, Miss Olive Lyster Bruce. You can now marry your discarded lover if he will have you. Perhaps he will not after being so nacceremoniously thrown over. Anyhow, you have my best wishes on the subject. Dear, worthy, staunch sister Rebecca, farewell. I forgive you, and wish you no worse than that you may live long to enjoy the annuity you have so discreetly earned in such a thoroughly praiseworthy and sisterly manner. And oh! sweet, sweet wife of mine, whom it is an agony to part from, an eternal farewell; and may you burn—in hell!"

Then he turns again to the wide-open door, by which stands Mr. Draycot; goes through defiantly, like the cur he is, into the big hall, and the library door is firmly closed after him.

In another moment those silent listeners in that room hear the front portal clang to with a force and reverberation that resounds through the whole of Marleswood.

It tells them he is gone, and they have seen the very last of Stephen Daunt.

So ends the history of a sin. "When night is darkest dawn is nearest," is oftentimes a great truth. Olive's night of sorrow is over, a new dawn of peace and happiness is already on its way—an Indian summer!

CHAPTER XXV.

"Learn several great Truths, as that it is impossible to see into the ways of Future, that Punishment always attends the villain, and that Love is the fond soother of the human breast!"

So the "sweet bells" ceased their jangling, to ring in, softly and gently, joy, peace and happiness!

What more could human heart desire? And yet there was still left in Olive's soul the sound of one tiny discordant bell in that sweet chime. No one heard the little jangle but herself, for it touched the love-chord.

That parting by the river, which seemed so far back in the past to her now, when she had bid her love such a sorrowful good-bye—nay, was forced to do so by no will of her own—still remained a lingering regret, full of mournful sadness, which she could not banish from her mind, try as she might to do so.

For the rest she was supremely happy. To her this glorious old English manor, with its verdant park and exquisite gardens round about it, seemed the most beautiful home anyone could desire or dream of possessing. Sir Gordon, too, was a tender and loving grandfather, who could not have too much done for the daughter of his dead son.

There was nothing to jar upon her in any way now. Her life was full of quiet peace.

Miss Daunt had retired again to Pont l'Abbaye, though not to the water-mill, Moulinot. She had bestowed herself and her annuity upon the convent of Saint Ursula for good, and no doubt the nuns were very charmed to receive her into their haven of rest.

Janet Daunt remained at Marleswoode, where Sir Gordon intended to keep her. She was perfectly happy to be always at Olive's beck and call. In fact, nothing pleased her better than to wait upon the girl in any way whatever. It was her delight. Poor thing, her life had not been a bed of roses, but the rest of it should be undisturbed and unmolested, Sir Gordon determined.

There were carriages, horses, all the luxury of nobility and riches about the girl, everything which contributes to make life happy, and full of comfort. She had nothing to wish for, as it appeared. But sometimes she would clasp her pretty, brown palms together and cry to herself,—

"I have everything in the world I could wish. Everything but—Alan!"

I fear we mortals are never satisfied; but, indeed, the girl's heart was still mourning for her lover, whom she had herself sent away.

She had not yet seen him, for he was still away from Seize Court; though she heard Sir Hubert telling her grandfather of his son's expected return home at an early date.

It made her heart thrill and leap to hear of his coming. She wondered how they two would meet—how, when, and where! What they would say to each other?—if they would meet as strangers or friends?

Of course now they never could be anything but friends. Alan could not be her lover again after she had treated him so badly, so miserably.

There was only one thing she desired him to know, and that was the fact of its not being her fault all through—not her fault they bid each other good-bye—that a shameful lie which she had been bidden to believe in a truth was the sole and only cause of that parting.

Perhaps his father would tell Alan all the whole story when he returned to Seize Court, and then he might understand her better, and blame her no more.

So the days took unto themselves wings, and brought a bright, crisp, glorious October noon.

The hedgerows were all russet-hued, and some of the first leaves were beginning to fall, but the country looked grandly autumnal and full of charm still, as Olive walked across the meadow by a little trodden-out path in the grass.

When she came to the kissing-gate at the end of this pasture land, belonging to Marleswoode, she stayed her steps a little, and, leaning her arms on the rail, looked round on the autumn beauty, thinking what a glorious place her home was, whilst overhead in an ash tree, hanging its branches thickly down, a thrush was trilling his roundelay.

There was a restful calm, a lulling sense of peace in Nature that day, that made the girl stand dreamily still and quiet by that old kissing-gate under the shady ash.

She thought over all that had gone before; of the fits of pain through which she had but so lately passed; the immeasurable difference between them and now; of her love and Alan Chichester; then, lifting her head, thought became reality, for lo! he himself was coming over the meadow where she had also come.

He was here, nearing her, to be soon by her side, as friend or enemy she knew not which yet.

The sight of him made her heart stand still, in a mingling of fear and rapture; fear lest he should pass her by as some utter stranger, because of his treatment at her hands, though she knew him of a forgiving and generous nature; and rapture at the thought of their once more being friends.

Olive waited in dumb anticipation of how it would be with them both henceforth.

As Alan reached her a sudden small courage

filled her little throbbing heart, a courage which made her lift her head to meet his look and hold out one hand towards him in a kind of greeting.

"We are neighbours!" she began, in a soft, tremulous murmur, full of wistful entreaty for him to be kind and generous and forgiving, "near neighbours, and—friends, are we not?"

Then she waited in an agony of dread, lest he should refuse to take that proffered palm in a new-born amity and goodwill.

In another moment doubt and dread vanished, for without a single dissentient gesture or look he takes her hand in his.

"With all my heart," he says, with a sort of earnest gladness, as if his breast was also lightened in some way or other by this meeting at the kissing-gate, and that until now he, too, had wondered what the future was going to be to them both.

"Olive!" he goes on the next moment. "I have heard a most wonderful story from my father since my return home yesterday—so marvelous a tale that I can almost feel inclined to discredit its reality, only that I know it is really true, and your presence here confirms it as a fact. It sounds like the veriest romance."

"Yes," she returns, looking up at him, "very wonderful things have happened to me since I saw you last."

"When you bid me go. Ah! you made me very unhappy, Olive—you did, indeed. Tell me," he adds, in a quicker tone, "why you sent me from you that day? Was it because of that most shameful lie they made you believe about my father?"

"Yes," she says, under her breath, with a little sigh, which is not all sorrow now but half gladness.

"You are sure, Olive?" he asks again, with increased earnestness; "perfectly, that it was the sole and only cause?" gazing down into her face, with his grey eyes full of anxious inquiry.

"Yes! What else could I do? I believed what they told me. Oh! I was so miserably unhappy!—such a wretched girl then?" she murmured sorrowfully in answer, with a world of pathos in her voice.

"You poor little darling!" Alan breaks out suddenly, putting his arm round her without the smallest obstruction on her part, and drawing her near to him. "You poor little sweet thing! I do believe you were fond of me all the time, after all! Were you not?"

She heaves another small sigh to herself, and lays her head against his breast. It is a sigh of bliss only now, for the last tiny, jangling bell in her heart has ceased its jar, and is hushed into sweetness for ever.

"Dear, dearest Alan!" Olive murmurs, in a kind of ecstasy to herself.

There is no need of any other answer, and he asks none of her. They are both quite, quite happy at last.

"For Love is the fond soother of the human breast!"

[THE END.]

OPENING LETTERS.—The dubious art of opening letters addressed to other people and fastening them so that no one will know it is a profession in Spain. In the post-office they have a dark chamber where experts inquire into things, and these have long since given up the use of steam for opening gummed communications. Even red-hot platinum wire for letters sealed with wax is out of date. The favourite means is said to be with a knife sharper than a razor, which is run along the bottom of the envelope. The letter having been extracted and then replaced after the officials of the post-office have learned what is going on, a fine line of liquid cement is drawn along the opening, the slightest pressure conceivable is applied, and lo! the letter is whole as ever.

BABY KISSES.

THE clovers and daisies courtesied low,
One day, when the wind went coqueting by,
While the dignified grasses seemed to show
Their joy at his coming by, quietly
Waving aloft pointed banners of green,
Backward and forward, with studied grace,
While a brooklet, babbling the field between,
Laughed, as she danced, with the sun on
her face.

My darling I took to this spot with me,
That she might play in the open air,
While I sank with my book beneath a tree,
Not to read, but to watch little Curly-hair.
Bubbling with song, a little bird flew
To a mountain-ash, where he paused to
sing;
Then out from the clover, two eyes of blue
Fastened in awe on the blithe little thing.

"Mamma," she murmured, "what does that
bird say?
Why does he sing so sweet and so long?"
He says: "Little girl, I am happy alway—
So happy I pay for my joy in song!"
Clasping her hands, the little one said:

"You nice little bird! Oh, sing something
more!"
He sang, then flew off with wings outspread.
I never saw a little bird whirl so before!

"But, mamma, I, too, am happy to-day!
But I have no way to pay for my glee.
Yes, I have! I just thought! Kisses will pay
For the joy dear mamma has brought to
me!"

"Heaven bless my darling!" I instantly
thought,
As the child's sweet lips on my own were
pressed.
What rapture to me her young life has
brought!

Never was mother on earth more blessed!

Her thought was sweet, and I prized it well,
Taking each kiss with a thankful smile.
More precious to me than words can tell
Are kisses from lips that know no guile.
Each anxious care she repays. I know

By the joy that thrills to my finger-tips!
No gift of rare gems can such bliss bestow
As the kisses we cull from baby-lips!

S. L. S.

G L A D Y S L E I G H .

CHAPTER I.

SOMEWHERE in England, in one of the southern counties whose shores are washed by the waters of the English Channel, shut in behind the great white chalk cliffs, there lies almost hidden the little village of Arle, unmarred by the builder's hand, unspoilt by the track of the railway, its quiet undisturbed by even the distant shrill of a locomotive.

Arle seemed a singularly favoured place. It was only seventy miles from London, yet very few of its inhabitants had ever visited the great metropolis.

A seven-miles drive and two hours or so in the railway would have brought them to the modern Babylon, yet it was only a few of the most venturesome spirits that attempted the pilgrimage.

For the most part a trip to the neighbouring town of Mashing was the utmost acquaintance with the pomps and vanities of the world that the good people of Arle permitted themselves.

There were few persons of the upper class at Arle. The rector and the doctor almost comprised them all, except the family at the Priory, whose ancestor had come over with the Conqueror, and who was now so poor that his daughter's entire wardrobe probably cost less than the Sunday attire of Mrs. Cluffins, the wife of the largest farmer in Arle.

But, dressed in coarse brown holland or

faded cotton, no one could have mistaken Gladys Leigh for anything but a gentlewoman.

Year by year her father had grown poorer and poorer, but nothing in the world could rob her of her beauty or her long descent.

One summer evening she stood in the garden, looking wistfully on the grounds which had once been the marvels of the country for their splendid cultivation, and were now little more than a picturesque wilderness.

It seemed to Gladys that theirs was the worst kind of poverty. She could better have borne an honest struggle for daily bread than this awful need of money without effort to gain it; this living in a house large enough for a nobleman, with two old servants for sole retainers, surrounded by difficulties and cruel assessments, and no certain income, however small, to meet the daily wants which would occur with such terrible regularity.

Poor Gladys! She was just eighteen. She could hardly remember her mother. She had spent her whole life at the Priory with an elegant father, who condemned money-making as vulgar, and cared little what became of his child so that the latest novels were on his library-table.

Poor little Gladys! Very little of love and kindness had been meted out to her in her eighteen years; and yet, such is the irresistible force of youth, good health, and high spirits, Sir Hubert's daughter was more cheerful than many girls brought up in the lap of luxury.

She was of the middle height, her complexion a creamy white, relieved by a wild-rose bloom. She had large lustrous blue-grey eyes, fringed with dark lashes, and the prettiest, softest, wavy hair of a silky, golden brown.

There was a wonderful capacity for happiness or sorrow, for joy or suffering, in the girl's face as she stood there in the deserted garden, and gazed fondly on the old stone walls her ancestors had raised centuries before,

"Oh, dear!" she said, with a little sigh, "how nice it would be if we were only a little richer! My ancestors entertained kings and queens at this old Priory, and here am I in difficulties about a dinner for a London lawyer. He is sure to have a large appetite; common people always have. Coffee and omelettes, pigeons and claret are our chief attempts at dinner. I don't expect he'd think much of them. What a pity it is he can't do without calling! Oh, if I had only been a man! I would have been a soldier, and won a name and fame for myself! I would have brought back the old glory to Arle Priory. But what can a girl do?"

"It is getting late, Gladys."

Sir Hubert had come in search of his daughter, a thin, scholarly-looking man with a languid, aristocratic manner, and long, shapely white hands.

There was very little likeness between Gladys and her father. She linked her arm in his. Such as he was, with all his failings, she believed in him implicitly.

If any one had asked her opinion of their poverty she would have said circumstances had been cruelly against her father, and his health prevented his making them better.

She would never have told you that he took care the poverty should not affect himself, and left every disagreeable of their position to her, even while he steadily refused to explain how his affairs really stood.

Their income might have been four hundred—it might have been nothing; Gladys did not know. To obtain a sovereign from Sir Hubert was a feat not accomplished without genuine hard work; in fact, it was so painful to apply to him for money that nothing but the sorest necessity ever compelled his daughter to resort to it. She was bracing her nerves for the effort now.

"What a beautiful evening it is!" she said,

fondly. "I am so glad you came out, papa, after your hard day's work!"

For it was a little fiction between them that Sir Hubert was writing a book—a work which, when published, would make his name famous and his purse full.

But the great task went on slowly. Gladys believed in it firmly. It would have been a shock to her had she known that, often as he talked of it—often as he spoke of it as the "object next his heart," the plot was yet unfinished, the title unchosen, and the first chapter half written.

"Yes, a little air does one good after battling with the library muse."

"And are you getting on, papa? Have you finished the first volume? When may I read it?"

Sir Hubert looked annoyed. He objected to emotion of any kind; even enthusiasm was distasteful to him. He answered, coldly,—

"I am advancing slowly. True genius can never be hurried. The works which live, Gladys, are the reflex of years of patient work."

Gladys felt reproved.

"I beg your pardon, papa; but I am so anxious to read it, you cannot wonder at my getting a little impatient; and it is so long since you began it, the people must appreciate it when they know it is the work of ten years of your life. Fancy, the book is more than half my age!"

"Patience," said the Baronet, quietly; "I never believe in doing things precipitately or in a hurry. Mr. Lorraine's visit will be an interruption. After a business conversation I shall be too upset to exert myself for days."

The conversation was turning in the direction Gladys desired.

"Have you ever seen Mr. Lorraine, papa?"

"Never!" returned Sir Hubert, scornfully. "I always preferred conducting such intercourse by letters, and the senior partner never opposed my wishes. I suppose he was growing old, poor man! Anyway, he retired last Christmas, and the first use his successor makes of his power is to insist on an interview with me. Fancy, my dear Gladys, he actually used the word 'insist'."

"I insist upon seeing you," he wrote in his last letter, 'or I shall at once resign the charge of your affairs.' Fancy that, Gladys, to the last of the Leights!"

"It is an insult!" said the girl, hotly. "I would have taken him at his word, papa, and told him to give up your business."

Sir Hubert shrugged his shoulders.

"Changes are expensive, Gladys."

"Surely one lawyer is no dearer than another?"

"But a new one would want money. Carlyle had served my family forty years. He knew his place too well to worry me by sending in his account."

Gladys felt her face flush. To whom else did they owe money? Would they never be free from the degradation of debt? Oh, if only her father were less particular about his book! If he would only complete it, and give it to the world, and let their deliverance come soon!

"How much do you owe Mr. Carlyle, papa?"

"My dear, you are always talking of 'owing.' It is not at all ladylike. Ladies should know nothing of business. They ought never to trouble their heads about money matters."

"How can I help it?" asked Gladys, with a kind of sigh. "The butcher declared six weeks ago he would not call for orders until his bill was paid. The grocer only lets us have things by taking their value in milk and butter, and—"

Sir Hubert threw up his hands.

"Spare me such details!" he implored.

"Gladys, you will kill all sense of the beauti-

ful and artistic in your nature if you descend to such conversation."

"But what am I do?" asked poor Gladys, with something very like a sob in her voice. "You told me to write to Mr. Lorraine, inviting him to dine and sleep here, and there is nothing for dinner!"

"We had dinner to-day."

"A pigeon and an omelette," said his daughter. "Papa, we can't set a hungry business man down to such fare!"

Sir Hubert took out his purse and produced a sovereign. He handed it grudgingly to his daughter.

"I wish I could teach you to prefer mental food to material delicacies, Gladys."

It was a little hard. Gladys would have lived on bread-and-water rather than trouble him for money, but she said nothing in reproof, and just then they came in sight of the terrace steps, and went indoors.

She did not turn into the drawing-room; she walked to a more remote apartment, which, in the straitened condition of the household, did duty as a kitchen.

An old man and woman sat there; the woman was darning stockings, the man polishing pebbles. Anthony was wont to spend one whole day in each week collecting seaside treasures; these were sold to a large fancy shop in Mashing, and the proceeds helped out the limited means of their impudent household.

"Joan, I've gold!" said Gladys, exhibiting the sovereign. "Doesn't it seem hard we should have to spend so much in feeding a stranger?"

"Why it seems like old times to see a guest at The Priory, Miss Gladys," said the old servant, heartily. "In your grandfather's time many's the night I've seen fifty sit down in the grand banqueting-hall!"

Gladys shook her head.

"But this Mr. Lorraine isn't one, you know," she explained. "He's only a lawyer!"

She sped away. Joan looked at her husband.—

"And he'll be a clever lawyer if he makes the master listen to him, or gets a sensible answer out of him. Sir Hubert's fit for nothing but his books. He's rare selfish, too. So long as he's not troubled himself he doesn't mind what straits his child's put to! It makes me wild, it does!"

"If only this Mr. Lorraine was a gentleman!"

"Hoot man! what difference 'ld that make? He'd want a dinner just the same, more's the pity!"

"If only he were a gentleman, and fancied our Miss Gladys, it 'ld just be the best thing in the world! Sir Hubert he'll never take more heed to her than he does now. If our young lady ever is to be taken care of, it's her husband as must do it!"

"She'll never get a husband here," said Joan, critically. "And 'deed, Tony, perhaps it's a good thing, if he was to turn out like her father. It's no secret the master broke my lady's heart."

"If Mr. Lorraine was young," repeated Anthony, stolidly, "and a gentleman, he'd be safe to fall in love with her. Miss Gladys is the prettiest creature eyes ever set sight on!"

"And she's as good as she's pretty, but she's proud; for she'd never cast a second thought to anyone she thought beneath her. And it's easy to see she's in no mind to like Mr. Lorraine, however he turned out. She's been too much troubled about him already."

But though Joan pretended to slight her husband's romance, his words were not without their influence on her, and that night she knocked at Miss Leigh's door as she was going to bed, and inquired what she intended to wear the next day.

"This, I suppose," said Gladys, calmly, touching the folds of her plain holland. "What does it matter?"

"But it matters a great deal—Miss Gladys

You are a grown-up young lady now, and you mustn't forget you're the last of the Leighs!"

"Even the last of the Leighs can't expect a dress to drop from the sky, I'm afraid, Joan!"

Joan surveyed her critically.

"You'll need two dresses, Miss Gladys—one for dinner, the other to come down in the next morning, and I mean you to have them, please!"

"Have you found me a fairy grandmother?"

The old woman wiped her eyes suspiciously.

"Do you remember your mamma, Miss Gladys?"

Gladys sighed.]

"Not well. I can just recollect someone who used to be always on the sofa, and speak to me in a low, sweet voice."

"That was your mamma, Miss Gladys. Well, she left a great many things behind her—things she had when she married, and couldn't wear after she was ill, as you remember her. When she was dying she gave them all to me; but dear heart, Miss Gladys, it wasn't for the likes of me to wear such fine clothes, and it went against me somehow to cut them up for a child, so I kept them till you should be grown up; and many's the time I've thought of telling you about them, only there never seemed a chance of your wanting to wear them."

Gladys looked at the kind old woman with dreary eyes.

"You loved my mother very much, Joan?"

"And so I ought, Miss Gladys. I'd been with Lady Violet ever since she was a baby."

"And you came here with her?"

"Aye, it was her fancy that me and Tony should come to The Priory with her. I was housekeeper, and Tony butler. Your grandfather kept twenty servants, Miss Gladys."

"And when did he die?"

"Before you were born, dear. Then it was found the estate was mortgaged, and there was very little money. I think things have been getting worse ever since; but there, dear, we won't talk of that. Come and look at the dresses!"

She led the girl away to one of the many unused rooms, placed her lamp upon the dressing-table, and opened a large old-fashioned wardrobe.

It was well-nigh twenty years since milliner and dressmaker had been busy with the Lady Violet's trousseau, but fashion's tide had changed again and again, until these old-world costumes were really not so much unlike those in vogue.

Gladys looked on with wondrous eyes; that anyone should have possessed so many dresses seemed incredible to her, and that such a wardrobe should be hers was stranger still.

But Joan had not spent fifteen years in an earl's family for nothing. With quick, deft fingers she took from one of the pegs a petticoat of ruby velvet, and a soft robe of creamy diaphonous muslin, fine as a cobweb, and trimmed with rare old lace.

"This will just suit you, Miss Gladys."

To please the old servant Gladys put it on. It fitted her like a glove. The dress looped in front, with ruby bows, revealed the rich velvet petticoat; her bodice, cut square in front, showed the fair white neck, while the short sleeves hid nothing of the beauty of the rounded arms.

Joan was delighted.

"You're just the model of your mamma, Miss Gladys. This dress fits as if it were made for you. Mr. Lorraine will see the heiress of The Priory is worthy of her name!"

Gladys sighed bitterly.

"I am so tired of being poor, Joan. Oh! I wish I had been a man! I would never have rested until I became rich, and restored the fortunes of The Priory!"

Joan answered her with a kind of sob.

"Don't think too much of money, Miss Gladys, darling. It isn't gold that brings happiness!"

"But I would like to try," said Gladys, wearily. "Fancy, Joan, I have never had money to spend since I can remember. It would be so strange just to have a purse full of sovereigns for once!"

Joan said nothing; she just gathered up the ruby robe and a soft white morning dress, and turned to leave the room, but Gladys stopped her.

"Was this my mother's room, Joan?"

"Yes, Miss Gladys."

"I have often wondered what killed her!" said Gladys, sadly. "I never heard of any disease."

"There was none, Miss Gladys. She just pined and faded away!"

"But she had my father," said Gladys, simply, "and me. She loved us—how could she bear to leave us?"

"She was so fair and fragile, Miss Gladys; you're made of a sterner stuff than your mamma. She couldn't stand trouble. It just killed her."

That night, as Gladys brushed out the waves of her soft brown hair, she seemed lost in a brown study.

"I can't go on like this," she mused, sadly.

"The uncertainty is killing me! If this Mr. Lorraine is not a very rough, objectionable sort of man, I will get him to tell me plainly how things are, and then I will speak to papa, and ask him to let us go away. If the Priory were let for a term of years, or till he has finished his great book, we might manage to pay our debts, or some of them. I hardly dare leave the grounds for fear I should meet a creditor. At dinner my thoughts wander.

Whenever I see the butcher's face I seem to know he is reckoning up how much we owe him. Oh, dear, how easy it would be to be happy if we were only rich!"

But Gladys Leigh was only eighteen. She possessed a splendid constitution, perfect health, and a heart unruffled by any dream of love or passion.

In spite of her many anxieties, her blue eyes closed in slumber five minutes after she had lain her head upon the pillow.

She awoke with a strange sense of expectancy—a kind of inward certainty that something was about to happen; in itself a pleasing novelty to the last of the Leighs. She sat up in bed with her head pillow'd on one arm, and tried to remember what had happened yesterday.

Very soon it all came back to her. Mr. Lorraine, her father's man of business, was expected at the Priory that afternoon; he would dine and sleep, returning to London the next day.

Breakfast was at ten o'clock. Sir Hubert always pleased his broken rest and sleepless nights if his daughter hinted her preference for an earlier hour.

Punctual to the moment he came into the breakfast-room, to find Gladys at her post behind the silver coffee pot. A delicate aroma of hot rolls greeted his nostrils, and there were new-laid eggs and fresh-gathered fruit on the table.

Sir Hubert sat down with an appetite.

"Shall you go to Mashing, papa?"

"Mashing! You know I never go there, Gladys. The noise and bustle of the place brings on one of my nervous attacks."

"But I thought you would not like Mr. Lorraine to arrive and find no one to meet him?"

"Mr. Lorraine is not a guest, Gladys, or at best he is a self-invited one. I make no doubt he will be able to find his way here unassisted. I am sure he has confidence enough for anything."

"Is he old, papa?"

"I daresay he's fifty; but that's young for a lawyer. Gladys, my love, may I request you to have the house kept as quiet as possible this morning? I spent a sleepless night, and

I shall endeavour to get a little rest to fit me for the fatigues of business."

Joan deemed her young lady after breakfast equal to any emergency, even to her master's weakness of decision. Joan settled that dinner should be at seven.

"The afternoon train gets to Mashing at four, Miss Gladys, so if we make dinner seven your papa and Mr. Lorraine will get two quiet hours of business talk before it."

Gladys asserted she could not fancy her father talking on business for a single quarter of an hour, much less two whole ones; but she did not say so. She listened to Joan's bill of fare—loin of mutton, roast pigeons, fruit tart, and cheese.

She even agreed that Mr. Lorraine should have the blue room. Hospitality was not often exercised at the Priory; this was the first time since Lady Violet's funeral that guests had slept in the grand old mansion.

Thanks to Sir Hubert's sovereignty and Joan's ingenuity Mr. Lorraine would have no cause to suspect the sorry straits of his entertainer. Fine-old damask, real antique silver, and beautiful rare china go a great way to making a dinner-table look inviting, and these Joan had no lack of.

"After all," she said to her young lady, "this Mr. Lorraine's coming may do the master good. It must be bad for him to sit day after day brooding in his chair."

"He doesn't brood, Joan; he writes. He is composing a work that will make him famous, and give us more money than we can spend."

"Dear—dear! But, oh! Miss Gladys, I wish he'd make haste! Don't you think the London gentleman'd bring it out in penny numbers or monthly parts, like they do the Family Bibles. A little of the money'd be so useful."

Gladys shook her head.

"No, Joan; there is nothing for it but to wait, and waiting ought not to be difficult when we know the result is sure."

CHAPTER II.

A SOLICITOR'S CHAMBERS IN LONDON. A well-to-do solicitor, evidently, judging from the number of clerks in the outer office and the stream of applicants constantly applying for leave to pass through the magic green-baize door which led to the head partner's private sanctum.

"Mr. Lorraine can't see any one for an hour," the head clerk announced, decidedly. "Mr. Carlyle's come up on business, and they are shut up together with another gentleman."

It was quite true. The present head of that prosperous office, its predecessor, and a third person were shut up together, and, judging from the faces of the three, the subject they were discussing must have been an interesting one.

"It's no use," the eldest man said, gravely. "You might as well knock your head against a stone wall as expect Sir Hubert Leigh to attend to business. He never did, he never will."

"What sort of a man is he?"

"Selfish to the core. He married the most beautiful girl in London, and broke her heart. I only wonder he has consented to see you at all, Lorraine."

"I think I worried him into it."

"And what are you going to do when you get there?" asked the late senior partner, a little sarcastically. "You'll find him a difficult customer."

Mr. Lorraine looked troubled.

"I must tell him he's on the verge of ruin, and repeat to him our client's very fair proposal. As he has no son I think it probable he may be prevailed upon to accept it."

"He has a daughter."

Mr. Lorraine shrugged his shoulders.

"The young lady is to be pitied."

"Well, I wash my hands of it," said Mr. Carlyle, decidedly. "You sent for me to tell you all I know about the Leigh property, and

to question me about Sir Hubert. I can't help you any further. My belief is he'll die in the workhouse, and I'm not sure but what he deserves it."

The third at that interview, who had not yet spoken, turned impulsively round at these words.

"He may deserve it, but his child can't. How old is she?"

"Eighteen."

"Eighteen! And no one to take care of her but this old reprobate of a father?"

"Even so."

The gentleman relapsed into silence. Mr. Carlyle conferred in an undertone with his successor, and then rose to go.

"Good morning, Lord Carew; I sincerely trust when we meet again it may be on pleasanter business. I shall be most happy to assist my late partner to draw up your marriage settlements."

Lord Carew flushed through his bronzed skin. He wrung the lawyer's hand, and thanked him; but he gave no clue as to when he should require that "pleasanter business," i.e., the drawing of his marriage settlements, accomplished.

Left alone he drew his chair a trifle nearer the pedestal writing-table, before which Mr. Lorraine sat in state. He seemed about to speak. Once twice he began, and then stopped himself hurriedly.

Mr. Lorraine grew impatient.

He had the highest respect for Lord Carew, who was a wealthy nobleman, and the heir to a dukedom besides; but really, the Viscount had taken up a considerable amount of his time, and he was remarkably busy.

"I need not detain your lordship any longer," he said, at last. "I will acquaint you with the result of my visit to the Priory immediately on my return. It is peculiarly inconvenient to me to go this afternoon. I could wish Sir Hubert had appointed any other day."

"I wish you would let me go instead of you!"

James Lorraine stared. He decidedly objected to his clients transacting their own business.

"I cannot prevent your lordship visiting the Priory if you choose; but I thought we had agreed it would be best for a third and disinterested party to—"

Lord Carew interrupted him hastily.

"Man alive! don't you understand what I mean? I want you to let me go down to the Priory as you, as Mr. James Lorraine, lawyer of the Inner Temple. Now do you understand?"

"But—"

"It's inconvenient to you to go; in fact, you've just said so. My time's my own. I know precisely the proposal you were going to submit to Sir Hubert, and—"

Mr. Lorraine had viewed the matter over in his mind. It was so inconvenient to him to leave town that he had even considered the possibility of sending his senior clerk. Lord Carew was a clear-headed, business-like man when he chose.

"I cannot see your object, my lord."

"I don't mind telling it you. I suppose you can keep a secret?"

"Lawyers learn that art early, my lord. I don't suppose any room in London has had more secrets or stranger confidences uttered in it than this den of mine."

Lord Carew bowed.

"You are aware that my rights over Sir Hubert's estate come to me from my maternal uncle, Mr. Brook?"

The lawyer bowed.

"For the last dozen years of his life, Lord Carew, it was your uncle's one object to get Sir Hubert into his power. If you don't mind my speaking plainly, I believe he hated him."

"He did. There were peculiar links in their history which caused my uncle and Sir Hubert to be sworn foes. I have heard so much of this baronet that some strange fancy makes me curious to see him. In my own

identity it would be impossible, but if you will kindly lend me yours for four-and-twenty hours I see no reason why my whim should not be gratified."

The lawyer smiled, as though tolerant of a weakness he could not understand.

"I shall be happy to oblige you, Lord Carew. Of course, if this ever got wind you would allow me to state publicly the matter was your desire, not mine?"

"Of course."

"And you will be careful not to betray yourself? I imagine the evil spirit himself would be as welcome at Arle Priory as Mr. Brook's heir."

"I will be careful. I suppose they know nothing of my uncle's death?"

"Yes, Sir Hubert is aware he bequeathed his estates to his nephew, but the baronet is not a business man by any means, Lord Carew. Without asking a question on the subject he concluded the nephew and uncle bore the same name. The one difference is, that whereas formerly he used to write, nay, "Old Brook" might do his worst, he now graciously extends the permission to "Young Brook."

"I see."

"I don't believe he would ever have agreed to see me only I threaten to resign the management of his affairs."

"And they are really desperate?"

"You know the offer I am prepared to make on your behalf—that if he relinquishes the Priory at once you will pay all his debts and allow him two hundred a-year."

"It's not much."

"It's too much. In point of law you might seize everything, and leave him and the creditors alike unpaid. Neither he nor they have any right over the Priory. It has been your uncle's in all but name for years."

"Well, this is the offer I am to make. I shall not forget. If he won't accede to it?"

"You must tell him he will be forcibly ejected penniless. He must agree to your proposal, Lord Carew. He ought to go down on his knees and thank you for it."

"I think I'd rather he didn't," said the young lord, coldly. "The man has behaved like an idiot, Lorraine, but I don't know but what I'm sorry for him."

"Sorry for Sir Hubert Leigh!"

"Why not?"

"He was Mr. Brook's sworn foe."

"But I haven't inherited my uncle's animus as well as his money-bags. Honestly, Lorraine, if Sir Hubert seems cut up at having to leave the Priory I wouldn't mind his staying there till he died. It's a serious responsibility turning a man out of the place where he was born."

Mr. Lorraine looked aghast.

"I understood his grace that the Priory would be required as a residence for you, my lord, on your marriage with the Lady Barbara Fane."

"I am not married yet."

"But you would hardly be likely to postpone that happy event until Sir Hubert's demise."

Carew smiled.

"I suppose there are other houses besides the Priory to be had for money, Mr. Lorraine. It doesn't matter very much to Lady Barbara and me where we begin our married life, but it might signify a great deal to that old man where he ended his days."

"You are too generous, my lord."

"Generous with what costs me nothing," said the Viscount. "I was very comfortably off before my uncle left me his fortune, and my future wife is an heiress, so I should be remarkably mean if I behaved as a skinflint to this crochety old baronet."

"This is the letter I received. You would, doubtless, like to see it. And, Lord Carew, the best train leaves Victoria at one o'clock. Bless me, it's turned twelve now! You'll never catch it."

But Lord Carew was of another mind.

"I shall catch it right enough, Lorraine. You don't know what energy I possess."

Mr. Lorraine thought he did know, considering he and Mr. Carlyle had been obliged to come to their office as early as ten o'clock because the young Viscount had chosen to fix that hour for their appointment.

Lord Carew got into his cab.

"Victoria-station. Drive sharp."

Then he threw himself back in the comfortable vehicle, and bethought himself of the letter from the Priory. It was written on strange, old-fashioned paper, yellow with age; and the hand, though distinct and regular, was too large and round for beauty. The note itself was very simple.

"The Priory, Arle, near Malling,
July, 1880.

"Dear Sir,—My father wishes me to tell you that he is willing to see you on Tuesday next. As Arle is so long a journey he thinks you had better dine and sleep at the Priory.—Yours truly,

"GLADYS VIOLET LEIGH."

"Gladys Violet!" repeated Lord Carew, "a pretty name. Poor child, I wonder if she has any idea of the trouble in store for her?"

Lord Carew was eight or nine-and-twenty—a nobleman of pleasant manners, kind heart, and more than average intelligence. From boyhood he and his niece, Julian Brook, had been staunch friends; with only fifteen years between their ages Julian had treated Royal almost as a younger brother.

He had known that Mr. Brook hated the very name of Leigh, but he had never guessed why until when they were travelling abroad, and his uncle suddenly met with an accident which proved fatal. As the nurse, a sweet-faced sister of charity, was removing the injured man's clothes a little gold chain was discovered round his neck supporting a locket of rich, dead gold, with the name Violet in small seed pearls.

Royal never alluded to it. Durably delicate, he never sought to pry into his uncle's confidence; only in the long hours of the night, as he kept watch by the sick-bed, he noticed that in all the paroxysms of pain the sufferer kept the trinket clasped in his hand.

"It is only a woman's face," said Julian, suddenly, noticing his nephew's interest, "but it is the fairest face I ever saw, and my eyes like to rest on it as long as they can see it."

He showed the locket to Royal. It contained the miniature of a young girl in the first flush of womanhood—bright and beautiful, and yet with a depth of expression in her blue grey eyes which seemed to imply a capacity for untold suffering.

"She is very lovely. I understand now why you have never married."

"Aye, I worshipped her. Don't think, Royal, this is a tale of woman's falsehood. From the first I had no hopes; my Violet had eyes but for man."

"And she married him?"

"Yes, and he broke her heart. She has been dead for years now. I set myself to encompass his ruin, and I have succeeded. Hubert Leigh will soon be a homeless outcast."

Royal said nothing.

"You are thinking I should not carry my enmity to vengeance. You don't understand—I tell you he broke her heart."

"She loved him," said Royal; "perhaps she left him children. Would you blight their future, too?"

The dying man looked troubled.

"There is one child—a daughter. Royal, I have left all to you. If she is like her mother befriended her. When Barbara is your wife get her to be kind to the poor child; but if she is like her father, cold and treacherous, let her share his ruin."

That scene made a great impression upon the young Viscount. He came back to England soon after his uncle's death, but the congratulations of his family upon his inheriting



[“YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOCK YOUR HEAD AGAINST A STONE WALL AS EXPECT SIR HUBERT LEIGH TO ATTEND TO BUSINESS.”]

Mr. Brook's vast wealth gained upon him; even when his betrothed wife remarked she had heard Arle was a lovely village, and it would be pleasant to have a residence there, he felt annoyed. He forgot others had not heard Julian Brook's story—they could not understand the romantic interest which the grey old Priory had acquired in his eyes.

Still he took no steps to assert his rights over Sir Hubert's estate; he seemed content to wait in perfect inaction. He might have gone on for years like this, but his Grace the Duke of Blankshire, one bright June morning, spoke rather seriously to his heir on the subject.

“I can't understand you, Royal. I consider you are treating Barbara shamefully.”

Carew opened his eyes.

“My dear father, why?”

“You have been engaged more than six months.”

“I know. Many people are engaged for years. When the engagement was first made you and my mother objected to a hasty marriage.”

“Because it would have been difficult for me to find sufficient ready-money to establish you as I could wish, but things are altered now. Your uncle's fortune leaves you perfectly independent, and the Priory will be a lovely country seat.”

Royal whistled.

“Your mother thinks October would be a very suitable month for your marriage,” went on the Duke, relentlessly. “You would then have a clear two months for your honeymoon, and could return to England in time to spend Christmas at the Priory.”

Lord Carew did not seem elated at this plan for his domestic felicity.

“I don't want to be married in October. I am not a boy; at my age a man doesn't like to have things arranged for him.”

The unfortunate Duke stared at his heir in sheer dismay. Royal was singularly free from the vices and folly common in fashionable

young men; both the Duke and Duchess were intensely proud of him, yet—it seems hard there should be a yet—he was a great trial to them. Neither understood him, both occasionally felt in the predicament of a hen who has hatched duck's eggs in her nest and sees her nestlings take fearlessly to the water.

“If you were not a Carew,” said the Duke, sternly, to Royal, “I might ask if your feelings had changed, if you intended to break your word?”

“My feelings are precisely what they were. I mean to marry Lady Barbara, only I am in no hurry.”

“It is so strange; she is a charming girl, the alliance is most suitable.”

So it might be; but yet, though Royal declared his feelings had not changed, he shrank from any fixing the time for his wedding.

He was quite sure in saying his sentiments were the same; he had just the calm, friendly liking for Lady Barbara he had felt when he proposed to her, but he had become conscious lately that life held a stronger love than this. The thought of his uncle's deathbed haunted him; he knew quite well if he lay dying it would be no comfort to him to hold Barbara's likeness in his hand; if she were taken from him he would not wear her portrait next his heart for well-nigh twenty years, and desire it should be the last earthly thing his gaping eyes beheld.

He meant to marry Barbara, he never dreamed of anything different, only he would fain wait before the irrevocable step was taken; perhaps he hoped his feelings might grow warmer. He never stopped to analyse his sentiments; the one thing he knew he desired was delay.

But after that conversation with his father delay became more difficult; he was obliged to see his lawyers and enter into the question of Arle Priory. From the first he had meant to see the child of his uncle's lost love, but he

had been puzzled how to manage it. To visit the Priory in Mr. Lorraine's name came to him as a happy inspiration while he sat talking to the lawyer.

“If I were a gay young man and she turned out pretty it might be a dangerous experiment,” he concluded, as he took his place in the Mashing train; “but then I am a steady-going fellow of nine-and-twenty, and within a few months of matrimony. She must be a child of fifteen or so, in whose eyes I shall seem a regular old fogey.”

(To be continued.)

DRESSMAKING AS A FINE ART.—Stage dressing has come to be recognised as a fine art, but very few people know what those perfectly fitting dresses cost an actress. To begin with, the model has to be an artist. She measures the model first, then cuts the linings, and if the woman hasn't the shape the lining has; she is made to fit the dress, not the dress to fit her as formerly. The goods cut out, the work begins and the woman is tried, soul, patience and temper. The waist is fitted for an erect carriage, the train for motion and the pannier and draperies for chair effect, to say nothing about the sleeves and collar, which are set and reset till every wrinkle and crease has been waxed into obscurity. During all this time the actress is as passive as a doctor's mannikin. She has nothing to say, and no suggestions are expected or heeded; it is immaterial how the garment feels. Fit, and not feeling, is the object sought. The dressmaker has everything to say in the matter, and she gives her customer what the design calls for and not what the actress thinks she would like. Women in private life never see a pretty stage dress that they do not puzzle their jealous little hearts for the secret. The only secret about it is that they don't know how a dress should fit or how it should be made and worn, and they are too wise to let their modistes enlighten them.



[UNREQUITED LOVE REVEALED.]

NOVELTIES.

ONE WOMAN'S FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

"Had we never loved so blindly,
Had we never loved so kindly,
Never met and never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

A FAIR bright day in early summer; the soft warmth of the season which someone has termed a "tyrant" tinged with the fresh coolness of the just-dead spring; the air laden with the sweet perfumes of wild roses, and all her sister-flowers, which Nature bestows with such a lavish hand at this season.

Warm, liquid floods of golden light on field, hill, and meadow, and the shrill, clear piping of birds filling the woods and copes with pure music.

Alden-on-Thames is a quaint, pretty, old-fashioned town, not yet raised to the dignity of being termed fashionable, and therefore quiet, peaceful, and picturesque to a degree.

No great, imposing, stone-fronted houses stand above the river with bold, glittering windows, like bold eyes, challenging the regard of all who pass along.

Those long, low-roofed homes, half covered with Western-Virginia creeper and all sweet climbing plants, mingling in perfect, but charming chaos on the roofs and over the small diamond-paned windows, gave one the idea that so must the old Arcadian homes have looked—all peace, simplicity, and beauty.

Alden-on-Thames boasted a kind of beach, where, in the cool of the evening, ladies, old and young, were to be seen, the elders doing fancy-work while they chatted, the younger ones sketching, or wandering idly about, sometimes alone, sometimes escorted, listening to the low lapping of the waves on the sand and rocks.

The town itself lay far back on a sloping

hill, from whose summit there was a view of the river as it wound in serpentine curves from the great metropolis, and finally lost itself in the broad sea.

Alden-on-Thames was a fishing village, and the little row of fishermen's huts, with their neat white blinds and muslin curtains, facing the river, indeed, nearly at its verge, gave an added quaintness, and, therefore, in the eyes of some, an added charm.

Alden-on-Thames had its aristocracy, real, old-time gentry, who deemed a dishonourable act an everlasting disgrace, who would rather have their sons brought home on their shields, like the Spartan mothers of old, than hear that they had shown fear in the battle; and who prided themselves as much on the purity of their women, and the chivalry of their men, as upon the beauty of their persons.

Squire Aden, who lived in the large time-worn house on the hill, and whose garden sloped away to its base, was one of these gentry—a jovial, grey-haired, wiry-figured man, with keen blue eyes, whose first glance won the regard of the observer, and the sound of whose voice sent a sensation of satisfaction through the hearer.

He was standing on the stone terrace that fronted the house, and which faced the long slope of grounds, where the sunlight slept on the soft grass, under the shade of the elms.

By turning to the left he had a view of the pretty town, whose houses nestled so cosily among the great dark trees and low thick bushes and the river, a broad sheet of rippling gold, with the red sails of the fishing-smacks standing out so redly in the full light. And down under the shelter of the elms, where the thick holly bushes and lilac hid them from view, only a hundred yards from the old Squire himself, stood two figures.

The man was of middle height, strong and sturdy of build, and with a fresh, honest face, and clear, honest brown eyes, that looked one straightforwardly in the face; a trust-inspiring face, and comely to look upon, rendered

more attractive by the loose, curling auburn hair that drooped over the broad forehead.

He was evidently not more than three-and-twenty years of age, but there was a self-reliance in his manner that many an older man lacks.

His companion was a small, slight girl of about twenty. She was very lovely, with a fair, pale, childlike loveliness that made her irresistible in the eyes of most people. Deep-forget-me-not eyes, long, soft golden curls hanging carelessly about her graceful shoulders, a complexion like a waxen lily; who would not pause to look again on such a face?

Agnes Aden and Tom Crawford had known each other from childhood. The Crawfords lived in that strange, old-fashioned house standing away back from the road, at the foot of the hill; their lands adjoined those of Squire Aden, and the two children would meet and go off for rambles, gathering wild flowers and chasing butterflies together until Tom was sent to school.

Agnes was put under the charge of a governess at the same time, and so the years went on, Tom coming home for the holidays and spending half his time with Agnes.

"Our children seem to be very much attached," observed Mr. Crawford one evening, as he and the Squire sat on the terrace smoking.

"Yes. I wonder will it last," replied the Squire, smiling significantly towards the unconscious pair.

"Let us hope so, eh—Squire?"

The words were put as a query, and when the Squire smiled and nodded his head, Mr. Crawford saw that what he had always hoped for was also George Aden's wish, and the two men clasped hands in the dusk over the unspoken compact.

On that particular evening when the old Squire stood alone on the terrace, Agnes had noticed an unusual restlessness about her companion, and a greater tenderness in his manner, and her fair face grew troubled.

Agnes had never asked herself what was the nature of the feeling she entertained for Tom. She was fond of him. When he was away she eagerly counted the days until he should return, and her face grew flushed and her heart throbbed with excitement when she knew he was back in the village, and then when he came!

Ah! Tom knew how he loved her, and he thought he knew how she loved him by those blushes and that bright, welcoming glance, but he did not speak. He wanted to make a position in the world first, for Tom Crawford had entered a shipping agents with the intention of working his way until he became owner.

They had been all over the grounds, down the larch avenue, through the rose garden; and all during that walk Agnes felt that her companion had something on his mind by the restless way in which he plucked, then threw away, the sweet flowers that met them. It was not like Tom—Tom, who was so fond of flowers.

Thus it was that as they drew near the house the girl paused by the fence, and putting her little hand on his arm said, gently—

"Has anything occurred to trouble you, Tom? You do not seem yourself to-night."

"Yes, something is troubling me, Agnes," returned he, glancing down half-doubtfully at her.

"What is it, Tom? You know I tell you all my little sorrows and trials," and Agnes smiled at the thought of her sorrows and trials. She had never known what the words meant in their entirety; and being an unselfish, good-hearted girl she knew there was cause to be thankful for her easy, luxurious, peaceful life.

"Oh! I suppose you will think me a muff," said Tom, in the irritated voice of one who suffers pain and seeks to hide it. "What do you say to my going away from England, right away to the Antipodes?" he added, with a half-laugh.

Then he paused, for he saw the lovely girlish face grow pale as the face of a dead woman, saw the long lashes droop on the ashen cheeks, and the pretty mouth quiver with bitter pain; and putting out his hand he drew the little trembling figure into the shelter of his strong young arms.

"You will not go?" she sobbed, laying her head on his coat-sleeve.

"Agnes, do you care so much? Look up, darling, and tell me, is it as friend or lover you will miss me?" he whispered, stooping and lifting the curly golden head till the blue eyes met his own.

He smiled as he encountered their gaze, so full of timid wonder, and so full of shy, true, sweet love; then the fair head went down again, this time on his breast, and Agnes Aden sobbed on for some minutes, half in sorrow, half in joy, but Tom soothed her by degrees, and then told her why he was leaving home.

"You see," he said, "if I go out to Melbourne and then on to Brisbane, and settle the bit of business, I shall gain the favour of the firm, and so get my wish of becoming a partner sooner than I hoped. I am perfectly confident of being able to do it to their satisfaction; but, Agnes, if you desire me not to go I will tell them to choose one of the other fellows," he added, in conclusion, and the quick ears of love detected the struggle between leaving her and the longing to gain his partnership.

"Not for my sake, Tom," replied Agnes, quickly, lovingly. "Go, dear, but take care of yourself: I shall be so anxious until you arrive in Melbourne. I cannot help that," she added, seeing his look. "Everyone who has friends going such a distance will feel anxious, and I shall only be one of many."

"Bless you, my little girl!" exclaimed Tom, gazing down in loving admiration of her bravely spoken words. Such a wee thing, so childishly innocent and so brave of heart!

Agnes Aden was brave of heart. In the moment when Tom asked how she would miss him came the knowledge that the love she had

felt for him as a boy was different to this love for the man, and the thought flashed through her mind that it was for his good that his employers were sending him to Australia, and the fear that he would hear the words she had uttered in her first grief made her look up brightly and hopefully into his face as she replied, softly, with her little hands on his breast—

"We love one another, Tom. Though ten thousand miles of sea lie between us our hearts will be the same, and when you come back you will have so much to tell me."

There were tears in Tom Crawford's brown eyes for the perfect love and faith these words betrayed, and his voice was a little husky when he spoke.

"I thank you, Agnes, for the pure, sweet love you have given me. Heaven make me worthy of it! But I need not tell you I shall be, and it—"

"Well, young people, so here you are," said the cheery voice of Squire Aden at this juncture; and the "young people" stood, both abashed, before him in the semi-darkness of the summer evening.

There was a half-amused twinkle in the old Squire's eyes that reassured Tom; and, believing that there is no time like the present, he stepped forward, drawing Agnes with him.

"As you have discovered us here and in this attitude, sir, I might as well ask you now what I intended asking you to-morrow. Will you give me your daughter? I need not say how I love her, only I will do my best to make her happy."

There was something so manly in the young fellow's manner, such an honest ring in the clear, young voice, that the old Squire's heart beat with a feeling that was very nearly akin to love. He had no son, but Tom would be one to him now.

"It looks as if you young ones had settled the question already," he returned, with a smile. Then, holding out his hand to Tom, he wrung it heartily. "She is yours, Tom; make her happy, and I am content. Now I think we had better go in, the dew is falling heavily," and the three went back to the house together.

CHAPTER II.

STEPHEN HALWAYE.

As the trio entered the wide, old-fashioned hall, where hung trophies of the chase, which had been the pride of many a dead and gone Aden—great deer antlers, foxes, brushes set in silver, and what not—the butler came out of a side door, and informed them that,—

"Mr. Stephen Halwaye was in the drawing-room."

Tom Crawford's face clouded slightly. He had hoped to have Agnes all to himself for this evening, at least; he would not have the chance of many more evenings with her alone or in the company. The cloud soon passed, however. He liked Stephen Halwaye. They had been chums at college, and many a scrape had the cool, cautious Stephen got hot-headed Tom out of.

So it was with real heartiness that he greeted the young fellow, who rose from a lounge in the pleasant bay window at the far end of the room as they entered. He was on quite friendly terms with the Squire's family, though not so intimate as Tom, therefore his apology for "dropping in" at such an hour was only spoken as a matter of form.

"You will stay to dinner, now you are here?" observed the Squire, and Stephen laughed softly, and caressed his silken moustache, as he replied.—

"With pleasure, Squire. To tell the truth, I came over in the hope that you would take pity on me; for all the rest"—meaning his mother and sisters—"have gone to a *soiree* or something, and I did not care to go."

Mrs. Aden came in just then—just the wife for Squire Aden, a handsome, well-preserved woman of forty, with regular features, soft,

fair hair dressed in the style of Marie Antoinette, and blue eyes—Agnes had her mother's eyes—that looked kindly upon the group at the window as she said, in low, clear tones,—

"Quite a party, papa! How did you manage that?"

He laughed, and explained how Stephen came to be there, but not a word of Tom Crawford; and, glancing quietly at the fair girlish face, the mother detected a subtle change in its expression that prepared her for the welcome news confided to her that night in Agnes's little dressing-room.

After dinner they returned to the drawing-room, and during the course of conversation Tom mentioned that he was about to leave England for Australia, on business for the firm.

"What part of Australia?" asked Stephen, looking up with a sudden flush in his dark eyes, an eager ring in his slow, smooth voice.

"First to Melbourne, then to Brisbane in Queensland," was Tom's reply. "Do you know anyone in those parts?"

"Yes, I do. A great chum of mine in—in H—"—mentioning a well-known shipping agent—"in Brisbane; so, if you like, I will give you a letter of introduction."

Stephen Halwaye sat where the shadow of a tall shrub, standing between himself and the light, fell across his face, and no one saw the sudden crimsoning of the pale cheeks, the tremble of the thin, red lips, or the quick triumph of the black eyes.

His voice was no longer eager; indeed, it had rather a lugger in its tone, as though its owner were tired or indifferent. No one there could guess that he had the greatest difficulty in keeping those slim, white hands steady as he lifted them to stroke the small dark moustache.

"Oh, how nice that will be!" cried Agnes, in delight. "It will not seem half so bad, in your going, if there is even one friend to greet you."

"You are right, Agnes, and now you will not have the awful picture of 'Tom' walking alone and forlorn about the streets," was the laughing retort. "Stephen, you are a brick! A thousand thanks, old man."

Stephen smiled curiously, cynically, in his safe, shady seat at Tom's honest thanks, but his voice was friendly, sympathetic, when he spoke, though he spoke in jest.

"For having a friend in Brisbane no thanks are due to me for that, surely; and as for the letter—well, you and I were college chums."

There was such a deal conveyed in these few words. Stephen Halwaye was past-master of the crafts of innuendo and complication, and he had a trick of the hands and shoulders which implied more than a volume of words. Stephen knew how to play his cards, and all there felt a warm glow of pleasure at this quiet denial of having done anything worth mentioning.

Agnes lifted her blue eyes to his handsome face in a rapture of pleasure and admiration, but she could not see him.

Ah! if she had. His eyes were fixed upon her face with a fixed, hungry passion in their black depths that would have startled her.

He rose suddenly, but quietly, and went to the open window, leaning his head out, and taking deep breaths of the cool, moist air as if he felt choked.

Tom did not ask Agnes to sing or play that evening, as usual; but they all sat conversing, of course, on the journey he was about to take, sometimes laughingly suggesting the finding of nuggets of gold; hoping gravely, half sadly, that he would have a swift journey.

At ten the two friends took their leave, the Squire walking with them down the avenue, thus leaving the mother and daughter alone, when Agnes asked her to come to her room after she had retired, where the girl's innocent love was told to the sympathetic ears of Mrs. Aden.

Only a fortnight had passed when Tom

coming over one evening, looking slightly pale, informed them that he was to start in another week. His berth had been taken and all necessary arrangements made; it now only remained to say good-bye and await the day of departure.

Every action, every look and word, was noted with loving anxiety and sadness by Agnes Aden during those few days—noted and treasured up in the cruel after-time, helping her to retain the faith that even to herself sometimes appeared misplaced.

In Tom's manner there was such a sad tenderness, mingled with manly endeavour to seem at his ease, and not sorrowful, as brought the tears often to the eyes of kindly Mrs. Aden.

So the time passed on, and the much-dreaded day arrived when the *Sea Foam* was to sail, or, rather, start, for the *Sea Foam* was a steamer of no small size either.

The Squire had promised that Agnes should go to the docks to bid Tom Crawford good-bye, and he would not go back from his word; but his heart misgave him as he watched the pale, anxious face looking out of the window of the first-class carriage as the train bore them to London.

Like one in a dream the girl clambered up the huge sides of the vessel; like one in a dream she gazed round on the hurrying sailors, the passengers—some white-faced and sorrow-bowed, some carelessly chatting with friends, some gaily talking with all who came near on the pleasures they intended enjoying from the "trip."

Then her lover came hurrying up the companionway, his handsome face flushed with the excitement of seeing her.

There was not much time in which to say their farewells, and they each stood speechless, clasping hands, and gazing passionately into one another's faces.

"Darling, you have faith? You believe that I shall be true?" he whispered, bending over her.

No one heeded them; they all had friends to leave, and not one heeded another party of leave-takers.

"Speak to me, Agnes. There, dear, do not cry."

"Not one word will come, Tom, and we have so little time," murmured the girl, wistfully.

Then making an effort she smiled up at him—such a pitiful, brave smile—adding—

"Faith! I have not even thought of that. When my faith in you dies my love will be no longer yours, and that can be—never!"

Simply and quietly as the words were spoken, Tom Crawford felt that this slender, childish-looking girl would love till death. He seemed to see all in a moment the depth and strength of her love for him, a love that had grown with her growth, and ripened with her ripening womanhood, and looking down at the uplifted face with its sweet blue eyes, he whispered—

"May Heaven keep me worthy of you, my pure little St. Agnes."

There was a visible change in the ship now; people who had only stood looking at one another now pressed forward, as though their words would not come quick enough. A confused mass of humanity, sobbing, smiling—smiles that were more painful to behold than tears; men's voices gruff with emotion, women's scarce audible, children's half-frightened, half-wondering. Amidst all this Agnes Aden was hurried down the ladder, and back to the jetty.

As they were all turning away sorrowfully enough, the *Sea Foam* being now only a great, black moving mass, someone came up to Agnes, and gently touched her arm.

"I promised Tom that I would go back to Aden with you, and cheer you up. He wants news of how you bore it, you know," said Stephen Halwaye's slow, smooth voice, and his words fell like balm upon her sorrowing heart. Dear Tom, how he loved her! She must be cheerful; so that his first news of her

should be pleasant, so smiling at the dark, handsome face, she said,—

"How kind of you, Mr. Halwaye; but you are his friend."

Stephen stroked his moustache, regarding the lovely pale face, much as a cat does a mouse, with his great black eyes, and he smiled slowly.

"Yes, I am his friend," he repeated. "I telegraphed to my chum Andrew Creagh, and he will be expecting Tom."

They were all out in the crowded thoroughfare of Poplar now, with its strange medley of humanity, sailors of all nationalities loitering at the doors of shops that seemed to share the peculiarity of the people, namely, of being anything one could like to imagine, clothes shop, china shop, tobacco vendor; everything here was of a nondescript character.

At the request of Mr. Aden Stephen hailed a cab, and the three were soon bowling at a swift rate to Fenchurch-street railway-station, where they found the train already in.

No one spoke during the ride, but when they reached home, and, indeed, all that evening, Stephen Halwaye talked in his smooth, slow voice to his rather silent, though appreciative listeners, of the many who crossed and recrossed those seas on which Tom would ere now be entering, and came back safe, and when he took his leave there was an impression on all their minds that Stephen must be greatly attached to Tom Crawford, and the old Squire, in bidding him good night, wrung his hand heartily, saying, a trifle huskily,—

"Come over and see us again soon, Stephen. You are our Tom's friend, and can talk with us of him."

CHAPTER III.

THE TELEGRAM.

In the city of Brisbane, at the corner of its principal street, and facing the narrow, winding river, there stands a large, well-built house, wherein those who have no establishment of their own, or who are travelling, may have excellent accommodation and pleasant company.

It was evening, and the November sun, which had been rendering the place unbearable all day with its white unceasing glare, was setting behind the mountain in a rich flood of crimson, gold, and deep purple lights.

All the inmates of the hotel were either on the verandah or lounging at the windows breathing into their parched lungs the soft, cool evening air, and at one end of the verandah, alone, stood a young man, leaning over the rails, and idly watching the passers-by in the street below.

He was not a prepossessing individual, with his high, hooked nose that smacked of the Jew, and his cold, shifty blue eyes, so palely blue as to appear green at times, and the cruel, cat-like mouth, rendered him an object of interest, but not of liking. As he was about to take out a cigar a girl appeared with a telegram, which he took in silence.

Opening the blue envelope cautiously he read the following:—

"To Andrew Creagh.

"Tom Crawford starts to-day in *Sea Foam* for Brisbane. Manage to keep back all letters to and from friends. Introduce him to girl. Mention her in letter to me. Will write fully per mail. Has letter to you."

"STEPHEN HALWAYE."

"What the deuce is in the wind now?" he muttered, crumpling the paper in his hand, and looking away over the dark hills, where a long, dull, red line lingered, as though in defiance of the pale serene moon, as she mounted her stately stairs to the heavens.

"Phew! the *Sea Foam* is in. I heard one of the fellows speaking to the captain of the—about her. I wonder how I am to carry out his orders?" he went on, musingly. Then it seemed to occur to him all at once, that he should have had the telegram before, and

looking at the date, found it had been at the hotel more than a month, during which time he had been up North for a holiday. "Well, it does not matter; he will not be in Brisbane for another week, and I suppose I shall have Steve's letter by then?"

The dinner bell clanging out just then caused a general stampede, Andrew Creagh being among the first to vanish, for he knew of old that at the general table of an hotel it was a case of first come first serve; and Andrew Creagh, in common with a great many of his sex, liked passing well the good things of this life.

The time passed on, and the expected letter arrived; a long, precisely-worded scheme of treachery against unconscious Tom Crawford and Agnes Aden, and Andrew Creagh rubbed his hands smilingly at the pretty little plot. Intrigue was his delight, but when a big cheque was the issue of success, then Andrew Creagh's heart warmed to his subject ten-fold.

A month elapsed ere he heard the name of Crawford mentioned in the office, and then he did not seek Tom out, only gave instructions for him to be sent to the — Hotel should he make inquiries for Mr. Creagh.

But one morning, as he was ascending the steps of the warehouse, Andrew felt a slight tap on his arm, and, on turning round, found himself face to face with a young fellow of handsome appearance, and evidently a "new chum," as the Colonists politely term all newcomers.

Instinctively he felt this to be Tom Crawford, but he drew back, waiting for the other to speak, and he felt that he would have no light task in carrying out his friend's orders, as he gazed upon that honest, self-reliant young face.

"Pardon me for accosting you thus, but I hold a letter of introduction to you, and thought I should like to make use of it at once, being a stranger to Brisbane. Ceremony seems out of place when you are such a chum of Stephen's."

Tom was looking very bright and cheerful, and he spoke in his cheeriest tones.

The voyage had done him good, and his business in Melbourne had come to a very satisfactory conclusion. Andrew Creagh smiled in a charmingly frank manner, as he held out his hand.

Tom's appearance told him how to act. He must be frank, jolly, and careless.

"Can it be possible! Welcome, old fellow, to the colony!" he cried, heartily. "I have been looking out anxiously for you ever since I got Stephen's letter."

"What a thorough honest fellow!" thought Tom, as their hands met in a hearty grip; and Andrew wondered if he could manage to commence operations soon.

"Have you got comfortable quarters?" he asked, aloud. "The reason why I ask is that if you are not quite settled, it would be a good plan for us to camp together. I camp at — Hotel."

This would enable him to get possession of Tom's letters, and he, therefore, awaited the answer with eagerness.

"Just what I wanted to ask you," returned our hero. "I am at the Queen's now, but, of course, do not intend staying, as my purse is not a long one, and I have no wish to run up bill for the pater to pay."

"Of course not," assented Andrew. "Then you come over at half-past twelve, and I will introduce you to the 'hostess.' Good-bye till then," and with another shake of the hands they parted—Andrew to enter the warehouse and mature his plans, Tom to pursue his business, which he had great hopes of finishing off with as great despatch as the Melbourne affair.

The evening found him duly installed in the hotel with Andrew, during the course of which Tom wrote some home letters, an example which Andrew followed. Next morning after breakfast he came into the room, apparently absorbed in looking at a packet of

letters in his hand, and having absently picked up his hat went out again, only to appear in a few moments with a look of apology on his face.

"What a selfish cad I am," he observed, and Tom looked up in surprise. "So I am," he went on, "here was I stalking off with my own letters, never thinking of yours, though I know you wrote home last night, and have not a moment to spare for posting them yourself."

"Really!" cried Tom, looking at his watch. "I had no idea it was so late. Thanks, Andrew, here they are. One to Stephen, and one to my affianced wife."

He said this with a manly, loving, pride in look and tone, no false shame; and for a moment Andrew's callous, deceitful soul misgave him at the part he was playing towards this honest fellow, for whom he could not help having conceived a liking; but he went on with the game, and Tom pursued his way, thinking loving thoughts of how Agnes would flush and brighten at certain passages in his letter. Poor Tom!

"I am going over to South Brisbane to see some friends this evening, Tom. Will you come?"

Tom Crawford had been in Brisbane over a month, and his business continued in a state of confusion owing to the loss of some papers.

He had brought them with him, he knew, and so advertisements were to be seen in every paper offering immense rewards for their recovery; but as they lay snug and safe in Andrew Creagh's valise it was not likely that these advertisements would be of any use.

It was Saturday evening—a lovely starlit evening—the air alive with the noises of different insects, and the bushes down by the river bright with the golden light of fireflies as they flashed to and fro; women's voices sweet and clear mingled with the deeper notes of men, came to them from the river as the boats glided by, the oars making a musical plashing accompaniment to their songs.

Tom, who had been listening dreamily to the music, and thinking of certain nights when he had rowed Agnes and a party of friends down the river, Agnes singing in her clear young voice to them, looked round at his companion and said,—

"Do you think it would be advisable to intrude upon them to-night without warning?"

"Pshaw! we are not in England, Tom, where if a man takes a fancy to a girl he is not acquainted with may turn grey before the introduction which etiquette requires can be obtained. We just make our appearance, backed of course by a friend of the family, and there you are. Come along."

Andrew rose with great eagerness while delivering himself of this speech, and clapping Tom Crawford on the back, he dragged him indoors, and very soon the two were walking briskly across the bridge on their way to the home of Mr. Hanlay, Andrew Creagh's friend.

They had not far to go, for Mr. Hanlay's house stood on the banks of the river, near the bridge, a pretty sloping roofed building nearly hidden from the view of passers-by by a luxuriance of vine and bush. A great cactus bush was placed on either side the steps which led to the verandah, and brilliant hued centaurs roses were everywhere.

On their opening the gate, a lady of pleasant appearance came out on to the verandah saying in that languid voice which seemed to be peculiar to the Brisbanites.—

"Good evening, Andrew! So you have brought a friend." Spite of the languor there was no lack of cordiality in the words and manner, and Tom smiled frankly as he held out his hand in response to her greeting.

"A 'new chum,' Mrs. Hanlay," he said.

"Then twice as welcome; we colonials hail the advent of a 'home' person ever with delight. Kate!" this in a higher key, "here

is Andrew, and he has brought a gentleman from home with him."

A light-tapping footstep sounded on the hard-wood floor of the verandah; a faint perfume of white rose lingered round them, and then a small, slenderly-built girl came round the far end nearest the river.

She was dressed all in white muslin, her waist confined by a broad blue sash that floated down to the flounce of her skirts. The face was pale and delicately cut, rendering the darkness of the eyes and hair intense—a pretty interesting face, which when the owner grew animated became fascinating to a degree.

Tom Crawford could not guess her age; she might be twenty or fifteen. He had offended several girls by guessing them five years older than they really were, but he thought, whatever her age, she was an exceedingly lovely little thing, and his honest admiration shone in his brown eyes as she was introduced.

When Tom rose to go that evening it was with a sigh of regret. The family had made him so thoroughly at home, they had all listened with such interest to his description of England, that he felt *himself* to be a person of interest. Then Kate, sitting on a cushion at her mother's feet, made so pretty a picture with that look of unaffected absorption on her fair features.

Tom was staunch and true to Agnes; but he would not have been a man had he felt no pleasure at this flattering attention in a young and lovely girl; and so he sighed when the evening came to an end, and the clasp he gave Kate's hand was a trifle warmer than it need have been.

"I have forgotten my cigar-case," exclaimed Andrew, as they neared the bridge. "Wait here, will you, old fellow?"

As this did not need a reply Tom made none, but stood looking, half-unconsciously, after his friend's figure as Andrew hurried along. There was a full moon, and every object was as plainly discernible as by day.

He saw Andrew go up the pathway, up the steps and pause half-way, for Kate had come out on hearing his footsteps, his cigar-case in her hand.

"I thought you would soon discover the loss of this," she said, with a laugh.

"Yes. You know me," he returned, taking out a cigar and lighting it. "What do you think of the young Englishman? He is not engaged, and you might marry a poorer man. Don't look so shocked, Kate. Good-night," and with a nod and a smile he left her.

Tom Crawford saw the little figure shrink back under the shelter of the verandah, saw the little hand go up to her side, and he smiled to think that Andrew should be too shy to speak of his love for Kate Hanlay.

And Kate had gone back into the sitting-room, looking a little paler than usual, and much—much quieter, while her dark eyes had a deeper light in them, like the first rising of the evening star, that will by-and-by shine out like a lesser moon. Would the light in Kate's eyes grow deeper, or would it fade and leave them dark for evermore? Time alone would show; but as she stood in her room that night she smiled and murmured, half-audibly,

"He looked as if he felt pleased."

CHAPTER IV.

"HOPE DEFERRED MAKETH THE HEART SICK."

The weather in England was unusually mild in November. Agnes Aden had gathered a bunch of roses, and carefully wired and packed them in a box, and mailed them to Tom. She had received one letter from him from Melbourne, giving a splendid and exhilarating account of his journey, and expressing hopes of being soon on his way home.

It was in reply to this she sent the roses, but no more letters came from Tom to her, though she wrote regularly once a week, sometimes asking, wistfully, why he did not write,

but never reproaching him, never hinting that his faith was broken.

Poor Agnes! Poor Tom! Poor roses!

The roses had floated away on the Brisbane river, away to the harbour, perhaps seeking their old home, but, alas! never finding it, when the slim, cruel hands of Andrew Creagh carelessly threw them out of the little wooden box that had brought them to Australia. How could Agnes! how could Tom! know this?

Each fretted quietly at the non-arrival of letters, each confided their misgivings to their enemy.

Christmas Day had come and passed, and the old house was decorated for the New Year.

Squire Aden kept up the old customs in their entirety, and there was to be a great gathering at Alden.

Stephen Halwaye came over in the afternoon, looking as excitedly pleased as he ever allowed himself to look.

Agnes and he had become close friends since Tom's departure. He had been so untiring in his attentions, and would talk by the hour of her lover of what he was doing, why he did not write, &c., and Stephen would bring forward so many reasons in excuse, that the girl grew to be quite fond of him, in a sisterly way. Hence, when he made his appearance on New Year's Eve with that pleasure on his face and in his manner, Agnes beckoned him out on the terrace, asking,—

"Have you heard from Tom?"

"Yes, such a jolly, light-hearted letter. He is making friends out there, and life with him seems to be pretty easy. But, of course, he has told you all that himself!"

Here Stephen, pretending not to see the swift, pained look of the true, blue eyes, drew out of his pocket a letter.

Agnes knew the handwriting, and unconsciously drew nearer the paper on which had rested the hand of him she loved so well.

Stephen, looking up, just as her wandering gaze caught the words "pretty—Kate," flushed, and drew back.

"I did not mean to be so rude," said Agnes, in a low, pained voice, "but he has not written to me by this mail, and—"

"Don't apologise, Agnes. I was afraid you had seen—There, what a fool I am! Not written to you? I cannot understand!"

All this was said in bursts, as though Stephen was astonished at something in his own letter.

"Not a line!" returned Agnes. "Does he not mention my name?"

"Let me see," running his eye swiftly down the pages. "Kate Hanlay—most fascinating—has money—um! um!—might do worse—money's a great power. If you were over here, old fellow, I should not have a want in the world." No, that's the end. No word of you."

They both stood very silent, Agnes looking away over the grounds, where the trees stood very tall and brown and bare, and the evergreen bushes struggled hard to make believe that the weather was warm by looking fresh, and green and polished; and Stephen gazed at her with a tender, protecting, pitying gaze, that made her turn her eyes to him.

"Mamma and papa must not think I am fretting," she said. "I am too exacting, and Tom will write soon."

This was said firmly, more firmly because she had felt a momentary jealousy at those words of his to Stephen Halwaye.

"Poor Agnes! Poor little faithful heart!" whispered Stephen, laying his hand on the girl's. "Agnes, shall I wait until the New Year to tell you something, or shall the old one complete its work of ruining your fair life?"

Agnes lifted her face, for she had bowed her head when first he spoke, and it had grown white with an unformed terror, and the pale lips could scarcely frame the words her companion had to stoop to hear.

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"Tell me now?"

"Agnes, do not look upon me as an ogre, a bearer of evil tidings, but Andrew Creagh complains in his last letter that his affianced wife, Kate Hanlay, is too much taken up with the young Englishman, and that Tom Crawford neglects his business to such a degree to be in her company that the whole town is talking of it, and there have been complaints at the office about his tardiness."

Now Agnes had heard several people speak of the slow progress Tom was making in Brisbane, comparing it with the expedition he had shown in despatching the Melbourne affair, and more than one had hinted that there was some attraction there, but she raised her head at Stephen's words, looking strangely dignified for so little a thing, in her pride and trust in Tom.

"Tom would never be so base," she said, quietly, and Stephen felt that he was playing a losing game. Agnes would never believe Tom faithless. He must try some other plan. Still it would be as well to allow no letters to pass between them.

Away in Brisbane Tom sat in his room, reading a letter from Stephen Halwaye. It was a broiling hot day, the ground parched and split, the grass all withered up, the trees looking sad and dejected; no rain had fallen for nine months, and the people, in common with the vegetation, suffered from the dry, scorching heat.

Tom was feeling considerably irritated at not finding his papers; he was hot and tired also, and had sat down with Stephen's letter hoping to be refreshed by the mere sight of words written in cool, sunny England.

But he had not read more than half ere he bounded out of his chair with a loud exclamation of anger.

"What the deuce does she mean? Sends her kind regards, and begs to return this packet!"

Then with a sudden change of manner he threw himself back in his chair, covering his face with his hands, and murmuring, brokenly,—

"Oh! Agnes, Agnes! and I had named you Saint Agnes, for I thought you were so pure, so free from deceit, so loyal!"

After a time he stooped and picked up the papers that had fallen from his hand to the floor, and smoothing one out carefully he read it from beginning to end. It was his last letter to Agnes, and she had returned it through Stephen Halwaye.

"Out of sight, out of mind," he muttered, bitterly, rising and going to the table whereon stood his desk. "There can be but one reply to this, and by Heaven it shall be short and sweet!"

The self-reliant lines came out very strongly as he sat down and took up the pen, and the brown head held itself aloft with a kind of defiant pride. In his anger he felt with the hero of the poet, who says, "Shall I die because a woman's fair?"

Short indeed, but destined to give bitter pain, was the letter, the only one she ever received from Tom Crawford, bearing the Brisbane postmark, which Agnes Aden, waiting with pained, anxious, but faithful heart, seized eagerly from her father's hands. It contained only these words,—

"Agnes Aden, I am sorry we made such fools of ourselves while I was in England. My youth, and, of course, yours, must be our excuse. Please consider yourself free. Tom Crawford."

This letter Andrew Creagh opened by a process known to himself, and finding in it nothing to incriminate himself or partner, sent it by that week's mail.

Mrs. Aden going up the stairs, on her way to her daughter's room, to ask what excuse Tom made for his long silence, found her lying in a dark heap on the lobby beside the jardinière, where some withered fuchsias stood, one little hand clenched on the fatal missive. Mrs. Aden carried her herself to

her room and laid her on her white bed, and bathed her white, blue veined temples with eau de Cologne.

After a time the blue eyes opened, and then the sweet, motherly voice asked why she had fainted? The soothing, motherly arms drew the little figure into its embrace, while she read those cruel words.

"He is a coward. I never thought I should live to speak such words of Tom Crawford," said Mrs. Aden, in deeply hurt tones.

"Don't, mamma!" Agnes's voice was full of pained pleading. "Mamma, mamma, I am sure there is some mistake, there must be. When he comes home he will explain it all."

And Mrs. Aden, seeing that the girl was convinced, said no more, but she and honest Squire Aden spoke of Tom Crawford in no light terms when they were alone.

"Let them settle it their own way. It is best for the old folk not to meddle in such matters," observed the Squire when his wife suggested speaking to Mr. Crawford on the subject; and so the chance of clearing up the matter passed by.

And Agnes Aden grew daily paler, more spiritless, more gentle in her manner to those around her; never speaking of Tom herself, but always asserting that there must be some dreadful mistake when her mother alluded to it.

And Mrs. Aden sighed at the strength of character her delicate child showed on this one question.

Stephen Halwaye was a constant visitor, and the girl greeted him always with pleasure. One day she inquired if he had heard from Tom lately, and he answered "no," the truth being that he had then a letter in his pocket in which Tom told him that he was detained for an indefinite period in Brisbane on account of a law case through the loss of some papers, but it would not serve his ends to tell her this, so he replied in the negative.

"But I had one piece of news from the Antipodes in the shape of a letter from Andrew Creagh," he observed, after a pause. "He says that Tom is going North with the Hanlays, the father, mother, and daughter. It is a pity Tom could not stick to business and when that was finished have his pleasure."

Agnes knew nothing of the lost papers, and therefore, could not bring any excuse solid enough to convince others to bear on Tom's conduct, so she remains silent; yet in her heart of hearts she whispered that Tom would come back some day and the mistake be explained, even if he did not wish their engagement to be renewed.

"When are you going?" asked Agnes, after a time, and looking with a great deal of sad regret at the pale, handsome, dark-eyed face.

It was evening, just dusk, and he sat with his back to the window, thus Agnes did not see the sudden hungry passion that leaped to those black eyes at her look and tone, the quivering of the thin lips, that for the moment seemed beyond his control. The "going" to which Agnes alluded was a journey to Rotterdam on business.

"In three days from now; this is my farewell visit," he returned, and Agnes started at something in his tone.

"All our friends are taking flight," she said, a trifle nervously. "I shall miss you most of all."

"Say that again. Oh, Agnes! Had I not been going to leave you, had Tom been true, I never would have revealed the truth to you that I love you dearer than life, my sweet, pure, Saint Agnes. Darling, if you can never love me I do not mind, only let me call you wife. I will be so loving, so true to you?"

He poured these words forth in a burning torrent; they seemed literally to flow without volition on his part. He had waited so long, and as he sat there in the strange quiet of the dusk, with the woman who, all unconsciously, had gained such a hold upon him, his pent-up passion burst its bonds and tumbled onward as a river flowing over a broken dam.

The shocked, sorrowful surprise on her face made him pause. Had he ruined all by this outbreak after all his scheming and crime? Had he, the cautious, sober, Stephen Halwaye let passion master him and ruin his hopes?

"Oh, Stephen, dear Stephen, I am so sorry!" exclaimed Agnes, putting out her hand to him, and he took and held it in a firm, gentle clasp. Agnes in her innocence saw no wrong to Tom in this declaration. Stephen had said that if Tom had been true he would never have spoken, and her tone was full of such womanly pity. "Oh, Stephen! I am so sorry," she repeated, "for I can never marry anyone but Tom. I am sure he will come back some day and explain why he wrote that letter."

Stephen sat moodily gazing upon the delicate, childish face of this girl, whose faith amounted almost to the supernatural, then he stooped forward and whispered gently,—

"You are not angry, Agnes? I could not help loving you. Oh! darling, if you would but give me hope?" Stephen was earnest in his love, and Agnes was not insensible to his attractions, and a certain fascination he held over most people with whom he came in contact, and her reply was not so decided as before.

"While Tom lives I shall feel myself bound to be true to my plighted troth even if he prove otherwise," she said, and Stephen caught at those words: "while Tom lives," though he did not appear to.

"Then good-bye, I will not stay to dinner. Tell the Squire and Mrs. Aden that I remembered an appointment anything you like. I cannot see them to-night, my mind is too much harassed. One kiss, there is no treason to Tom in that" he caught the slight, trembling figure in his arms, cursing Tom as his lips met those of the woman he loved and could not win, and then, without a word more he strode away, leaving Agnes in a strange whirl of conflicting emotions.

Stephen loved her. Tom, according to his letter, did not love her as he had sworn to do. He had himself broken the tie that had bound them. Should she wed Stephen and try to make someone happy? Her own life was ruined. Should she strive to ward off that horror from Stephen's life that had fallen upon her own?

These and many other thoughts chased each other through her mind, but the memory of Tom's kisses, the close clasp of his strong arms about her came so vividly before her that it seemed as though a voice reproached her for infidelity. No, while Tom lived by the memory of those kisses she was his, though he should never claim her. It would be a sin, a cruel, wicked sin to wed one man loving another, for she felt that wedded or unwed, should she and Tom Crawford ever meet again—her soul would go out to greet him—and she had not lost her faith in that first idea that there was some terrible mistake. No, she would be true to her word. Only with life would she lose faith,

CHAPTER V.

ILL IN THE BUSH—KATE HANLAY'S LOVE—REWARD OF FAITH.

"So you call this a town?" said Tom Crawford, quizzingly, as he and the Hanlays walked along the red-brick pavement of a little sea-port town some seven hundred miles from Brisbane. It was a clear, starlit night, and the wind blowing from the stormy Pacific was keen and refreshing. They had only just arrived, but as all were good sailors there was no weariness apparent in their manner.

Kate and Tom were going on in advance of the older folk, who exchanged pleased, meaning glances as they watched the slight, delicate girl leaning upon the strong arm of her sturdy companion. They knew that their child had grown to love the handsome, young Englishman, and they hoped that he returned it; but men were all more or less like the proverbial

sailor—"a sweetheart in every port, and any port in a storm." Tom knew very few girls in Brisbane, and Kate was the prettiest of them. He might be only amusing himself for want of any other way of passing his time.

This they had thought until that journey up in the boat; and then Tom had been so attentive that it became noticeable to all on board; and so when they arrived in Mackay, the father and mother draw back, letting the young folk go on together. Tom was not looking well; the trouble and vexations of losing the papers which had been entrusted to him by his employers, together with the pain which Agnes's strange conduct caused him, were taking effect; and as the hot weather came on he felt himself growing languid and low-spirited.

Mrs. Hanley, seeing this, insisted on Tom's accompanying them to Mackay, where they would be right away from business; and Tom, knowing that he could nothing until the papers were found, consented.

He knew by this time that he had been mistaken in the thought that Kate and Andrew were lovers; but that Kate had conceived a liking for himself never entered his head. Had he been a little more concealed he might perhaps have sooner learned the truth, but if he noticed that Kate's expressive dark eyes grew more lustrous at his approach, he laid it to the warm-heartedness of the Australians.

And Kate, as she walked by his side up the ill-lighted street, which put Tom in mind of a little country village market-place, kept telling herself that Tom loved her, and would whisper it to her some day. Had not Andrew told her that Tom was proud, and meant to make his way before he thought of marriage? And then Englishmen were proverbially shy of telling their inmost thoughts even to those they loved.

Ah! Kate, such pretty, wise reasoning! but still that little throbbing heart of yours, let it not thrill with joy for him! Oh! Kate, Kate, pretty, innocent Kate, why was not a better fate for you? Why must you give the priceless treasure of a pure woman's love to one whose heart is embittered by the supposed treachery of the only woman he will ever look upon with eyes of love and passion?

They put up at the hotel, and the first few days were spent in visiting friends, to all of whom Tom was introduced with an air of proud, pleased proprietorship that struck carefree Tom for the first time; then the manner in which those of his own sex would rise from Kate's side at his approach set him thinking, and once the idea entered in his mind he soon discovered pretty Kate's secret. But neither by look or word did he betray his knowledge. His manner was indeed more gentle, more protective, and, alas! Kate's love grew deeper and deeper.

Once or twice Tom felt inclined to tell Kate Hanley the story of his love, but, man-like, he could not bring himself to break the fair dream in which Kate lived, and so he held his peace.

Sometimes he, like Agnes, wondered if it would be a sin to wed this sweet Australian lily, never telling her of that other woman who had embittered his life. Kate would make a man happy; she was so guileless, so fair and gentle, something like Agnes in her manners, only, heaven forbid! not so treacherous! And then he would give himself a hearty shake, and dismiss the thought, for no man can make a woman happy, try as ever so hard, if his heart is given to another.

They had been in Mackay four days when Mr. Hanley entered the sitting-room accompanied by a stalwart, brown-faced man of about fifty, whom he introduced as "George Huntley."

"What do you say to a run inland?" asked Mr. Hanley of Tom, after a short space, during which the two ladies had been chattering with their old bush friend.

"I can scarcely say anything, as I do not know how long it is for, sir," replied Tom;

"but I should like to see as much of Queensland as I can."

"Well, my friend Huntley is going back to his camp to-morrow, and he wants me to go up with him. Shall we say 'yes'?" It is a two days' journey," was the answer, spoken rather coaxingly, for Tom's appearance was causing himself and all his family a great deal of alarm.

His eyes were hollow, his cheeks pale, and he had taken to putting his hand to his head when suddenly addressed, as though his thoughts were scattered, and had to be collected before he spoke.

What he wanted was a change. He had taken that business of the papers too much to heart, and there was nothing like good, hard riding to oust unpleasant thoughts from a man's mind. So after a little more discussion Tom gave in.

Kate sat very pale and quiet all that evening, and when at about eight Tom proposed that they should take a walk, she rose in silence.

It was so cool and still out of doors, and Tom led her in the direction of the river, which lay so calm and still in the moonlight.

On the other side was a small patch of cocoanut trees, looking dark and grim in the bright light, with their glossy foliage like gigantic ferns waving softly in the gentle breeze.

The strange calls of the night-birds was the only sound that broke the stillness, until Kate looked up into Tom's face with a sad, sad smile, saying,

"Do you know, Mr. Crawford, I feel as if this will be our last walk together. Something tells me that when you come back from Nandee Station things will be changed. Come away from here, those trees are mocking me."

Poor Kate! She broke off suddenly with a little sob, turning her head that he should not see her face; but Tom knew her secret, and her voice told him how she suffered; and then Tom did what many others had done before—what many will do again.

Loving one woman with a passion that was slowly eating his very life away because of its apparent hopelessness—because of the supposed perfidy of Agnes Aden, he turned, lifting the lovely face to meet his own in the moonlight, saying, gently,—

"Let it be different. Shall things be changed when I come back, Kate? Tell me; is it yes or no?"

No word of love; he would not lie to her. But his low voice and the tender glance of his brown eyes were enough. Kate laid her hand in his, whispering so softly and with a bright, happy smile,—

"Yes."

And then the memory of Agnes rushed upon him; all the deep, tender, passionate love he had tried to kill by calling her "jilt," "coquette"—any name that came to his mind as appropriate—rose up in his soul as if in mock-ing reproach.

The waving arms of the cocoanut-trees mocked him now, and it was with an inward groan that he took the little hand and led her back to the hotel.

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"He is dead, Agnes; you cannot deny that. Agnes, have pity on me! It cannot hurt him for you to marry me now. The dead sleep well—have pity on the living!"

It was Stephen who spoke—Stephen, bending over the drooping form of Agnes Aden as she sat on a rustic bench in the old familiar garden at Alden-on-Thames.

It was bitterly cold—that sharp, biting cold that is ever the token of a heavy fall of snow, cold and dreary, for the sky was dark with the coming storm, but Agnes heeded not that her hands were blue and numb, her small feet in absolute pain.

All outward pain was crushed by this most bitter sorrow—the tidings of Tom Crawford's death.

There was no mistake; the cold, business-like-worded paragraph stared her in the face, copied from an Australian paper:—

"On the 3rd of December, Thomas Crawford, second son of —— Crawford, Esq., of Alden-on-Thames, England, at —— Station, Macmam, of brain fever. English papers please copy."

Tom was dead! The bright-faced, brown-eyed lover would never again clasp her hand, never again would she hear his voice!

The old childish days, when no thought of love had entered their heads, came back so vividly. How he had always done her slightest will! No cliff was too high for him to climb if a flower she coveted grew at the top, and now he was gone out of her life for ever!

She lifted her eyes, heavy and dry, to her companion's face as he poured out this wild, passionate appeal.

"I am thankful, Stephen, that never once did my faith waver. He knows that now," she said, softly. "There has been some awful mistake. Oh, my poor boy!—my poor boy!"

And now the tears came—a quick, burning torrent that seemed to scorch the delicate pale cheeks, and the pretty golden head was bowed in the small trembling hands.

Could she but have seen the cruel, scoffing smile that played round the gentle, kind Stephen's mouth!—the hard, fierce light that leaped to his eyes!

"You have not answered me, Agnes! Think of the living! The dead do not need your care!" cried Stephen, hoarsely.

For once he had lost command over his voice.

"Stephen, listen to me calmly, without interrupting," returned Agnes, putting her hand on his arm, and drawing him down on the seat at her side.

"Once, Stephen, when I first received Tom's cruel letter I did think it would be kind and right of me to marry you, because you have been so faithful and true, and Tom did not want me, but you did.

"I thought over it—not one night or two, but for whole weeks. I asked myself if I could put Tom's image out of my heart, if I could meet him calmly and quietly, not with throbbing, loving heart, and I knew I could not. I knew that if ever Tom came back that my soul would rise up in glad rejoice. I knew that, in spite of all, my faith in him was unbroken.

"Now he is dead it makes no difference. I will live my life, and when I am called away I will go to him in Heaven, and say, 'Tom, my faith never wavered—I have been true to my plighted troth!'"

An impatient movement from Stephen Halwaye made her pause, and looking round quickly in surprise, she saw his face with an expression on it that startled her, so that she cried out—a fierce, hungry, wolf-like look that sent a chill, worse than that of the cold, to her heart. His features were livid and pinched, his great black eyes glaring with the red glow of a wild beast.

"Curses light upon Tom Crawford, living or dead," he shrieked, flinging out his hands in a perfect frenzy. "Curse him. He with his boy's face, his fickle, changeable, boy's heart! How can you love him? He is a traitor—a coward! Who but a coward would have written that letter!"

The cool, cautious, smooth-voiced Stephen Halwaye had let fall the mask, and now that Agnes had once seen the bitter hatred he nursed in his heart for Tom Crawford, he cared not how far he went. He would have revelled in telling her the story of the purloined letters, the lost papers lying so snug in Andrew Creagh's portmanteau, only he might get himself into trouble, besides—Ah, there was another reason!

"I have hated Crawford ever since we were boys; he always got the very boys I wanted for friends. You, yes; I began to love you even then, and you went blackberrying with Tom.

It was all Tom! Tom! I have sometimes felt that it would be a pleasure to stick a knife into his back when he has been bending over you with that smile on his face, so sure of your love!"

"Stephen!"
"Oh, yes; you are shocked—horrified! You thought I was a saint, coming over to watch over you, and soothe your agonies for my rival. Pshaw! you little fool, as if any man under the sun would have been patient and tender as I have been with you had he not love to spur him on—"

"Stephen, oh! Stephen, do not say such things. Do not make yourself out such a villain," cried poor Agnes, in pleading tones. It seemed so hard to believe that what he said was true.

"That is it, Agnes. I am a villain, a black-hearted, irredeemable one, for I do not repent. I am not even sorry," was the answer; then changing his tone and manner, he thrust out his hands and drew Agnes into his embrace.

"Agnes, marry me, let me have some return for all my scheming. Oh! Agnes, will you let me go forth into the world lonely and broken-hearted for the memory of a man who valued not the priceless gift you gave—your love?"

But the girl's soul revolted at the very touch of this man now. He had been playing a part all these years. He sought only to blacken Tom's name in her eyes, and there was anger as well as reproach in her eyes and voice, when, wrenching herself from his clasp, she faced him in the grey, cold light of the December noon; faced him with a cold, proud scorn upon lip and brow that made him shrink.

"Go from my sight, Stephen Halwaye, and know that you carry with you my deepest contempt. I have, indeed, been mistaken in you. We all thought you one of Tom's friends, and you have turned out the veriest viper ever nursed in one's bosom. Do not ever come here again, for our doors will be closed against you. I have nothing more to say. Go now. The sight of you sickens me!"

During the delivery of this speech, Stephen half-crouched against the dark hole of a bare chestnut that stood near the beach, his face grey and pinched, his lips livid, his eyes downcast. Love for Agnes Aden was the only true sentiment that had ever taken root in his breast, and her scorn and contempt seemed to wither him as the cold, north wind does the delicate, early spring flowers.

He seemed to become visibly older, and as she finished speaking, her voice had been so stern and cold; he raised his dark eyes to hers, all the fierceness gone from them, only a humbled, shamed pleading in their depths.

"I will go, Agnes; but if ever you think of me in the future, let it be as of one who erred and repented," he said, in faltering, husky tones. He paused a moment with that longing look of awakened shame and love upon his face, and then turned away. He dared not touch her. The cold contempt on her face held him back, and so he passed away from her sight.

No one in Aden ever saw Stephen Halwaye again, but there came rumours from the New World of the notorious gambler, Steve H——, and his wicked, reckless career, and Agnes felt she had not been too hard upon him when she gave him his dismissal, and he passed out of her life altogether.

The sun is shining down in a blinding white glare, such as is only seen in tropical climates; a broad stretch of scorched land, with here and there a tall gum-tree, straight and white-trunked, too tall for its soft feathered foliage to afford shelter from the sun, is all that meets the eye.

No shade anywhere for man or beast—no cool plashing river to soothe the racked senses.

Stay; there is a small cluster of trees, conspicuous among them a large palm with its

nodding plumage, and something white gleaming among the green.

It is a cottage, and at its door stands a girl, small and slender, with a pale, tired face and great dark eyes, gleaming with the strange lustre of eyes that have not known sleep for some time.

Surely that face is familiar? Yes, it is no other than Kate Hanlay.

A voice sounds clearly and sharply upon the air, the voice of Tom Crawford, but harsh and unmusical, and the girl turns wearily, and enters the cottage.

Then is explained her weary, haggard look, for on a coarse rude settle is stretched the form of Tom Crawford—Tom Crawford, pale, exhausted, delirious.

He had not been at — a week, before the fever laid him low, and Kate had insisted, as his promised wife, on being allowed to nurse him, her father and mother yielding a reluctant consent when they perceived how earnest she was; and then, too, they knew that a hired nurse was out of the question.

She had been with him now three days, and already the sleepless nights were telling upon her.

But there was still another reason for her altered looks; in his delirium Tom took her for Agnes, and clasping her hands, poured out the whole tale of anger at her perfidy, and the deep love that would not die.

He seemed to have forgotten the existence of herself, and her gentle loving heart nearly broke with the strong restraint she had to put upon herself, and sit hour after hour by the side of the man who was more than all the world to her, and listen to his passionate appeals of love to that other girl.

As she entered the room Tom raised himself on his elbow, calling querulously upon Agnes, and Kate went to his side, and laid her cool hand upon his brow, and he laid his head again on the pillow, murmuring softly,—

"Dear, little St. Agnes, and I dreamt that you were false. I wonder if you love me as I love you? I think not; it is not possible!"

He closed his eyes, and appeared to sleep after this, and the girl sat still as a statue, fearing almost to breathe.

This sleep, perhaps, would save his life. The hours passed on, and a deep golden light slanted in through the open door, and a soft breeze gently lifted the brown curls on the blue veined temples of the prostrate man, and still he slept on.

Kate rose, and went to the door, after a time holding her hand above her eyes, and peering across the wide stretch of land, for she fancied she heard horses' hoofs on the hard, dry earth.

There was a certain beauty in the rugged grandeur of the country around her. The tall, white gum-trees, still and motionless, and the grim, dark mountains away in the distance, standing out so dark and rugged, with that deep, red light of the setting sun behind them.

Over her head the sky was a pale amethyst, while further towards the west, deep purple, and gold, and the crimson light, rose higher and higher, till it met the purple and golden lights and blended itself with them. All was calm and peaceful, a quiet hush was over the land, resting after that day of awful heat, and Tom Crawford rested too.

The daylight faded out of the sky, stars came out, and the moon showed herself on the horizon, but the after-glow remained in the sky, a dull, red glow that seemed to brood over the mountains; and just as Kate turned to re-enter the cottage the quick thud of horses' hoofs sounded on her ear, and riding towards her, showing darkly, with the red light for a background, Kate saw a horseman leading another horse with some dark object thrown across it.

Not many minutes elapsed before the girl stood by the horseman at the rear of the house, and discovered him to be, as she had hoped, Mr. Huntley. But she was not pre-

pared for the ghastly spectacle that met her eyes as she turned them upon the horse at his side.

Flung across the saddle was the form of a man, his face so covered with blood as to be unrecognisable. He was evidently insensible, for he never moved even when Mr. Huntley drew him from the horse's back, jerking him not a little.

"Who is it? What is the matter?" asked Kate in frightened accents, gazing upon the blood-dabbled face in horror.

"It is Andrew Creagh, and his horse shied and threw him on to some rough stones. Luckily for him I came along. It is an ugly gash. See, just on the temple; and I think his arm is broken. You have two patients now. Our hospital is increasing," returned Mr. Huntley, trying to allay the girl's fears by that last remark; but Kate shrank back, speechless.

Alone in the bush with these two men sick, perhaps, unto death! What should she do? It was, indeed, a trial for Kate Hanlay, brought up in a town, and tenderly nurtured by loving, anxious parents. Then looking bravely up in George Huntley's rugged brown face, she said,—

"Since I am here I must do my best. Carry him into the cottage, and call Mary."

This was the black gin who did the house-work for Mr. Huntley.

Kate washed the senseless man's face and bound up the wound as neatly as any nurse, and then turned to get something to restore him to consciousness.

As she was about to step across the log that did duty as a step in front of the cottage she saw a white bundle lying on the ground.

She stooped and picked it up, and to her surprise saw it was a packet of letters, the topmost one being addressed to Tom Crawford, bearing the English postmark, and unopened. There was no time now to inquire into this strange business, for Kate felt instinctively that these letters had fallen from the person of Andrew Creagh.

After some time Kate succeeded, with the help of the gin, in restoring the wounded man to consciousness; but he showed no inclination to explain how he came to be so near the station, nor the reason of his fall, so Kate went out of the room, and passed into a kind of tent near the humpy, which had been erected for her use.

Once there, she cut the string which bound the letters, letting them fall into her lap. And then she stared in amazement. English letters to Tom, all in the same handwriting; letters to England written by Tom to Miss Agnes Aden. This must be the Agnes of whom he raved incessantly.

Not till after long thinking did Kate Hanlay break the seal of the first letter, but having read one she opened all the others, her sweet, pale face growing stony in its pallor, the large eyes dusky with anguish, as she read the story of Tom Crawford's love and Agnes Aden's strong, unflagging faith.

She laid the last one down. Love was not for her. It was hard—so hard—to give Tom up. Must she do it? She could burn these letters. Tom would never know. And she had risked her life for him. He would have died but for her. His life belonged to her. She knelt down on the pile of rugs and furs, that served her as a bed, rocking herself to and fro, ever and anon crying out piteously, with outspread hands, that this other girl would never know, and that Tom belonged to her.

The moon was up now, and her beams fell in a full broad flood upon the girl as she knelt there alone, wrestling with this great temptation.

Presently she lifted her face, distorted by pain, pale and haggard from nursing.

"I cannot give him up!" she muttered.

And then, as if the act of speaking aroused her, Tom's wild, agonised appeals to this Agnes seemed to ring again in her ears; his soft, low murmurings of pleasure as she

soothed his brow with her cool hand—all came back. And then the sweet, pure faith breathed in those letters from Agnes Aden. Ah! that other girl must love him well.

Should she keep him from her, knowing that he still loved her, believing her false?

"Heaven forgive me! I love him so! But I will write to this Agnes Aden, and tell her all, and then I—"

Tears and sobs choked her utterances; and for some time she sobbed on in silence, no sound breaking the stillness outside.

Alone in the rude little tent, with the pale moonlight falling softly upon her dark graceful head, she fought her battle; and when she again lifted her face, the moonlight showed it calm, white, resolved; a brave young face, pitiful in its bravery, for the dusky, pain-filled eyes told the tale of her temptation and conquest; the close shut lips told how hardly that conquest had been won.

When she went into the room where the two sick men lay, Mary was sitting there, doubled up on a brandy case, smoking away vigorously, her great black eyes fixed earnestly on the face of the newcomer.

"Him wake plenty, missis," she said, nodding her head in the direction of Andrew. "I think he close up—die."

"No, Mary, he is not dying. No die yet," returned Kate, reassuringly, though she felt far from hopeful herself. "Are you in much pain?" she asked, bending over the prostrate form.

"Yes—no!" he moaned; then, opening his eyes and fixing them upon her face, "Kate, is Tom dead, really?"

"Dead!" she said, in quick horror at the mere thought. The blood seemed to leave her heart and crowd upon her tired brain. "Who told you that?"

"I heard it in Mackay. And, Kate, you will despise me when I tell you how I came to be in this plight and why!" whispered Andrew Creagh, faintly.

"Hush! You must not talk. You are too weak."

"Let me tell you. You know I have a friend in England named Stephen Halwaye. Well, it appears that he and Tom Crawford both loved the same girl; Tom was successful."

Andrew paused a moment, and then went on to tell all the reader knows, saying, in conclusion,—

"When he found Agnes was faithful, even after death—for I got Tom's death announced in the *Courier*—he bolted off to America, writing me a note to say that he left the business of the papers in my hands, and he hoped I should not get into trouble over them."

"He must be a coward!" said Kate.

"Yes he is. I am sorry that I ever helped him. I took a fancy to Tom the moment we became 'chummed' at the hotel. And when I got Steve's letter, I started straight for Mackay. Imagine my horror when I heard the report going about that Tom had died at Station of brain fever!"

"I can tell you I felt awful! Coming up there was no water along the road, and the dust was so thick I thought I should choke every minute. My poor beast fell twice from exhaustion before the accident, the third time he fell on me, and my head coming in contact with a log or a stone, I knew no more until I opened my eyes and saw that black face looking solemnly at me!" pointing at Mary.

"Me savey what name you talk, massa; you talk long a me. What name you want? Drink, ki-ki. This fellow, nice fellow ki-ki," and she held a glass of rice water to his lips, which he drank at a draught.

Then his eyes wandered to the other end of the room, and he seemed to become aware for the first time that there was another occupant.

Kate's glance followed his, and, not waiting for him to speak, she whispered,—

"Yes, that is Tom. He has slept for two hours. I pray Heaven he may recover, for

the sake of all those who hold him dear, and—and for Agnes Aden's sake!"

Andrew looked at her questioningly, but she turned away.

Not yet could she talk calmly of that time when Tom would be with her no more.

The battle with self had been won, but she had not conquered her love.

She went out into the garden, to the side of the humpy, where a few bricks formed into a hollow square did duty as a stove, and commenced making something in a basin for her invalids.

Presently Mary came running towards her, her black eyes rolling, her hands upraised.

"Massa Tom sing out plenty! Two fellow white man sing out! Me fright!" she gasped.

And Kate put down the tin pot, and turned in the direction of the humpy again, a new fear at her heart.

But she was needlessly alarmed now, for Tom was conscious.

It was Andrew who wandered in his speech, gabbling out the whole story of the abstracted papers in his delirium.

But Tom was not in a fit state to comprehend his meaning, lying there watching Kate, as she moved about with noiseless tread. At last he spoke,—

"How came you here, Kate? It is kind," he murmured, holding out his hand, and Kate took it, blushing painfully.

"There was no one else to come," she said, simply. "Now you must keep quiet, and you will soon be able to give me my *cough*."

Yes, he would soon be able to do without her. His heart sickened at the thought, and all her strength seemed to desert her.

When the two men slept that night—Andrew drew quiet after a time—Kate Hanlay went to her tent, and taking note-paper from a small bag in the corner, sat down, and commenced to write.

She rose and crept to the opening several times, listening for a cry from the cottage; but all was quiet, and then she went back to the old position.

Fair into the night she sat with bowed head, writing swiftly, filling page after page, and when she at last laid down her pen the moon looked a mere shadow in the sky, and on the lovely, dark-eyed face was such a look of pain as one would not wish to see more than once in a lifetime.

She had written her own doom in those words to Agnes Aden, but she had secured the happiness of the man she loved.

Andrew Creagh's injuries proved to be not so serious as George Huntley had at first thought, and in the course of a few days he and Tom were able to be carried out into the open air and laid on some piled-up rugs and blankets.

A week after Andrew's arrival Tom was able to walk without help, and Kate asked Mr. Huntley to go down to Mackay and get some provisions, at the same time entrusting her precious letter to his care.

He was away six days, and when he came back one cool, moonlit night he saw the three young folk walking about, laughing and talking as though such things as brain or low fever, and a fall from a horse were quite small matters, and not to be thought of when over.

"Nice fellows you are!" he exclaimed. "Nearly kill Miss Kate with your sick vagaries, and then coolly laugh and talk and strut about as if nothing had happened!"

His voice was full of delight, though he spoke in this strain. Kate drew back at the allusion to herself; but Tom put out his hand, thus detaining her.

"Stay, Kate," he said; "I have something to say to you. Let me say it to-night. We shall soon be on our way back to Mackay, and then to Brisbane. Come, Kate!" leading her down a path where some mangoes hid them from those at the cottage, for Mr. Huntley and Andrew had left them when Tom commenced speaking.

There was a huge stump of a gum-tree here, and Tom motioned her to take a seat at his side, and then for a little while they remained silent, the hush of night upon them as upon all else.

The air was sweet with the odour of Australian jasmine, sweet and heavy with perfumes of all kinds, which in the hot, scorching day were drawn up and devoured by the greedy tropical sun.

Only at night did the flowers give forth their scent, and the two sitting there silently inhaling the intoxicating air, felt a glamour stealing over them.

In Tom Crawford's heart there was a gentle, yet deep and fervent respect and tenderness for this girl who had risked her very life for him, who had suffered untold hardships for his sake; and when he compared her fidelity with the faithlessness of Agnes Aden something like love rose up in his heart for this fair Australian lily.

"What is it you have to tell me?" asked Kate, suddenly breaking the silence, which was becoming unbearable.

"This, Kate," he replied, drawing her head down on to his breast. "When are you going to give me your sweet self? I can never tell you what I think of your noble conduct, but my life shall show."

For a few brief seconds she let her head rest where he had placed it, and he felt her slight form tremble as if with cold; then she lifted her head, her face deathly, her eyes glowing like dusky-hued diamonds.

"Never, Tom!" she said, almost coldly, her pain was so great. "Never; for Agnes Aden, your first and only love, is true—aye, truer than you have been!"

The ice once broken, words flowed thick and fast, Kate telling the story of Stephen's deceit, and Andrew Creagh's part in it in quick hurried tones, that gave Tom no time for remark.

She told him how he had raved of this Agnes in his delirium, and of the night when she found their letters, saying in conclusion,—

"I wrote to her that night and told her all. She is waiting for you in England. Do not keep her waiting any longer. She is good, and pure, and faithful as Stephen Halwaye is false."

"And what of my sweet, noble Kate?" he asked, gently rising and laying his hand on her shoulder, for she had risen, and now stood half turned from him. "How can I atone for the misery I have caused?"

"Kate will do well," she returned, trying to laugh, but her face would not relax into a smile. "Go home, Tom, and forget me. I mean the—the night before you left Mackay. Let us be always friends. Write to me from home, and ask your wife to write to me. We are going back next week; let this be our last conversation on the subject. I will tell my mother all myself."

Tom felt that Kate Hanlay's resolve was firmly fixed. She loved him, but his happiness was first. He could not help seeing that she loved him, but he did not speak of it. He stooped and pressed a soft, reverential kiss on her brow, whispering, as he clasped her hand in both his own,—

"Friends, Kate, sweet, noble Kate, friends always and ever!" and then they went back to the humpy where George Huntley and Andrew Creagh were seated on the log smoking their pipes.

Andrew felt by the look on their faces that there had been an explanation between them and rose, saying to Tom,—

"Can you forgive me, Tom?"

"Yes; though you have caused me no end of misery and made misery for others," returned Tom, a little coldly. He could not forget that if Andrew had refused to help Stephen Kate would never have let herself love him, for he would have come to them as an engaged man.

"Steve has me in his power, never mind how, and I dare not refuse him even had I

the inclination, which I honestly own I had not, but I never dreamed so much unhappiness would be caused," said Andrew, in reply, and then he put his pipe back in his mouth, and smoked on in silence.

* * * * *

Spring in England, that lovely season when the whole earth is teeming with promise; soft, balmy breezes blowing across the pale green meadows; frail blossoms nodding gently among pale green leaves; birds calling shrilly to one another from the brown boughs of trees whereon tiny shoots had begun to appear.

Down on the beach at Alden-on-Thames Agnes Aden walked slowly, with bent head and tightly clasped hands, clasped over some paper closely written.

There was a mingling of pain with the joy on her fair face—pain for the girl who had loved Tom so well and so vainly, for in Kate's letter to Agnes she told her all—told her love in such simple, pure language that more than once Agnes paused, unable to see through her blinding tears.

There is never a sweet without the bitter, but after a time joy at Tom's promised return to her, faithful and loving, overcame all else, and she went down to the beach to think it all out.

"How soon can he come?" she asked herself, and the water rolling up on the golden sand at her feet, murmured in low, lapping whispers,—

"Soon—soon."

Fair and sweet looked Agnes Aden as she stood by the broad river in the Spring sunlight, her skin pearly white against the darkness of sealakin hat and paletot, her eyes reflecting the colours of the cloudless sky. Happiness is great beautifier.

"How soon?" she asked the lapping water, but only the old murmur, "soon—soon" greeted her ears, and she turned away, asking herself ever that vain, longing question, "How soon?"

* * * * *

A month later. Tom has written. He will be here soon.

Agnes Aden spends half her time on the beach watching the ships sail slowly and calmly by on the bosom of the water, her eyes ever turned in the direction of the Channel. It never occurs to her that he may come by another boat. She tells herself that he must pass there, and so day after day she goes down to the sands with a book which she never reads, and some crewel work that generally fitters to the ground unheeded.

She is sitting there one evening watching with wistful eyes three large, white sailed vessels glide gracefully by her, and wondering if one is Tom's ship, when a sturdily built, strong young figure comes quickly down an incline towards her.

The figure pauses to gaze a moment at the fair picture. Away in the west the sun is hurrying to its toils in other climes, crimsoning sky, landscape, and water, and sending here and there a rich, golden shaft to vary the beauty of the scene.

A golden shaft has fallen across Agnes Aden's small figure as she rises, still gazing towards the Channel, whence Tom's ship must come; and the man, coming quickly forward with outstretched arms, thinks Agnes Aden has a more saintly look on her face than ever.

"Agnes!"

"Tom!"

Not a word can either speak for a long time, but Agnes remains in his arms, clinging to him, and sobbing softly. They are quite alone; there is no one to see this first meeting after long months of separation and sorrow—no one to see the close passionate embrace. Then Agnes draws back to look on the loved face.

He is changed. Pale, and rather thinner than when he left England, and older, much older. It is that strong look of determination that makes him appear so much older, but it

is Tom—the old Tom come back, and she laughs almost hysterically.

"I suppose you wonder how I came here? I came by steamer to Glasgow, and travelled post-haste by train here—and my darling was waiting for me!" cries Tom.

"And Kate!"

For a moment Tom's brow clouds, and his lips quiver; and then he stoops over his faithful love, whispering, softly,

"She bade me give you this kiss, and to ask you to write to her. Her father has taken her for a trip to Melbourne. They started the day before I left Brisbane."

"I think we had better go home now," said Agnes, looking up into his face. "Mamma and papa are as anxious to see you—"

"Not now. I have seen them; it was they who sent me to you. My father and mother are there. So come, my darling, we will go to them now, and soon they will give you to me—mine till death do us part!"

He spoke gravely, solemnly, taking her hand in his.

They walk away slowly, talking sometimes, sometimes pausing to look back at the broad, calm river, with the deep, golden light falling upon it. As they reach the top of the incline, before they turn away and are hid from sight, once more the two bright faces look towards the sea, and a ray of golden glory falls across their heads like a message or harbinger of future peace. Then they turn away, and are lost to sight.

Their story is told. Agnes has received her reward, and Tom Crawford's life is brightened and blessed through "A Girl's FARTH."

[THE END.]

HUMOUR.

A DUE proportion between the humorous and the other faculties has been pronounced the characteristic merit of thoroughly sound minds.

A certain amount of humour is required to keep the mind from producing mere dry husks of argument; too much makes it throw up merely fantastic forms.

Emerson regards the perception of the comic as a tie of sympathy with other men, a pledge of sanity, and a protection from those perverse tendencies and gloomy derangements in which fine intellects sometimes lose themselves.

A rogue alive to the ludicrous he holds to be still convertible; but, if that sense is lost, the rogue's fellow-men can do little for him. A nation can be great without the comic element in it, for the Jews appear to have been wholly without it, and the Romans very nearly so—but in all the nations of the modern world, where a great and original literature has been created, there has been a powerful comic element at work.

Men of great minds, such as Virgil, Rousseau, Milton, Schiller and Wordsworth, might have been greater still had their possession of that sense been more demonstrable.

In Milton there is, as Carlyle observes, but little humour; but his coarse invective has in it contemptuous emphasis enough, yet scarcely any graceful sport.

An "elephantine unlikeness" is what Carlyle ascribes to him. Humour belongs to the keenly observant natures, and to persons who love men in the concrete, not humanity in the abstract. Of Wordsworth it has been said that his want of humour amounted to a positive endowment.

Genuine as were Scott's sympathies with the Highlanders of his native land, and sincere as was his love for them, he wonders why "our solemn, proud, dignified Celt, with a soul so alive to what is elevating and even elegant in poetry and feeling, is so super-eminently dull as respects all the lighter play of fancy?"

The Highlander never understands wit or humour, while Paddy overflows with both. Sydney Smith was for applying the rule to the Lowlanders, too, but much more plausibly may the indictment be laid against the Germans, the mass of whom are entirely without

a sense of the ridiculous—a defect which most educated men regard as a great disadvantage, and the longest consideration will but show that they are right.

That power which consists in seizing on the ludicrous side of action and thought, and avoiding what would give a fair ground for ridicule, is justly pronounced a legitimate and desirable result of high cultivation.

Humour is a quality which of all others most strongly tends to keep one from mistakes, warning those who possess it of the errors into which they are led by their own understanding with a sort of certainty which resembles instinct, and the want of which is almost always accompanied by a deficiency in what has been happily called the "perception of mental perspective."

Perhaps we may venture to assert that humour in all its senses implies a certain delight in strange contrasts of moods—a pleasure in extracting laughter out of tears, or vice versa—a more or less decided love of the eccentric, and therefore, in creative shapes, a power of blending together the most diverging lines of sentiment, so as to produce harmonious or at least agreeable effects.

PARIS ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Most of the shops were closed on New Year's day, but those devoted to the sale of flowers and bonbons formed a pleasing exception. Here, again, dense throngs congregated, and it may be fairly said that a glimpse at the windows of the flower-shops was well worth the walk. Nothing could have been more tasteful than the effect produced by the row of superb bouquets arranged with exquisite skill and a correct eye to colour. One novel feature was the imitation of a painter's palette, the colours being arranged in patches of flowers on a white ground, with a little batch of real brushes in the corner. Another consisted of floral fans, which gave free scope to the employment of the artistic taste in the arrangement of natural flowers, and formed one of the prettiest novelties in the shops. Baskets of bonbons, surmounted by dolls of different shapes and sizes, were also in high favour, representations of old Father Christmas—not being forgotten.

The good-humoured crowd moved slowly along, thoroughly enjoying everything, and to all appearances totally oblivious of everything but the pleasures of the hour. The *Jour de l'An* is associated with the anything but dulcet strains of the *orgue de barbarie*, a savage instrument which one is happy to learn is about to be exiled from the domains of the Republic. Alas, the organ is the least of the annoyances to which the unfortunate sojourner on the banks of the Seine is subjected. One's door bell is tinkling all day along, and it is astonishing how ignorant one is both of the marvellous number and great variety of people upon whom one is dependent for existence, especially those whom we are thankful not to see oftener than once a year, the *vidangeur* among the rest.

The barber who shaves one tempts his clients with a plateau, which he ostentatiously fills with large coins. In the streets and boulevards extended palms meet you at every step. The more impulsive the beggar the more irresistible he is, the only wonder being that any civilized city can tolerate such frightful exhibitions as here abound.

Strummers on guitars, singing and selling songs of their own composing, Italian violinists with their dirty but picturesquely-clad children, who serve as artist's models, and the throng of mendicants who are for this day only, happily, permitted to torment mankind, render Paris unbearable. Vehicles full to overflowing of whole families, including the youngest born, en route to pay the annual visit of duty to those from whom, perchance, they have expectations, drive rapidly by. Many had to accomplish these pilgrimages on foot, the cab strike having commenced to make itself felt.

Feb. 13, 1886.

FACETLÉ.

DISCRETION in speech is more than eloquence. A fine coat may cover a fool, but never conceals one.

He who puts a bad construction on a good act reveals his own wickedness at heart.

The Chinese picture of ambition is "a mandarin trying to catch a comet, by putting salt on his tail."

As it is generally acknowledged that "blood will tell," the thing to be careful about is not to make confidants of your relatives.

From the prompt and safe way in which horse-thieves are hung out West, it looks as if that portion of our beloved country was under the rule of a hang-era.

"If you wish to have a shoe made of durable materials, you should make the upper leather of the mouth of a hard drinker, for that never lets in water."

There is a fortune in store for the milliner who shall devise a bonnet that can be worn in any part of a church and always present the trimmed side to the congregation.

"It is really very odd, my dear!" said an old lady, one very hot day, to a friend. I can't bear the heat in summer, and in winter I love it."

HUSBAND: "Well, my dear, did you see some beautiful things on your mountain excursion?" Wife: "No. The guide told me to look where I walked; so all I was able to see was my boots."

AN INCONSOLEABLE WIDOWER.—Count (to his servant): "John, I have noticed that ever since your wife's death you have come home drunk every evening. Why is this?" John: "I am only trying to console myself for my loss." Count: "And how long is this going to last?" John: "Oh, sir, I am inconsolable!"

MISS S.: "Ah, Mr. St. John, you have been out shooting. What sort of luck did you have?" Mr. St. John: "Well, I scared up seven partridges." Miss S.: "How many did you shoot?" Mr. St. John: "I did not bag any, of course, for I had my sniping suit on, don't you know!"

"FRIENDS will please accept this the only intimation," put a malicious compositor the other day, religiously following his "copy," in setting up the advertisement of a funeral in a morning paper, which he meant to read: "Friends will please accept this, the only invitation."

"Now, Willie," said a coaxing mother, "I don't like to take medicine any better than you do, but I just make up my mind to do it, and then do it." The child looked up through his tears, and replied: "And, mother, I just make up my mind that I won't, and I don't."

WHAT A CIVIL-SERVICE EXAMINATION HE WOULD PASS!—A class in mental arithmetic was questioned concerning the number of men required to perform a certain piece of work in a specified time. The answer given was "Twelve men and two-thirds." A bright lad, perceiving the oddity of two-thirds of a man, amended instantly, "Twelve men and a boy fourteen years old"—fourteen, he explained, being two-thirds of twenty-one, the legal age of manhood.

At the breaking out of the Crimean war, Rachel, the celebrated French actress, was in St. Petersburg. Just before leaving the Russian capital some of the Russian officials gave a banquet in her honour. One of the Russian officers, a noble of high rank, said to Rachel in a bantering sort of way: "We will not bid you good-bye, but merely say *au revoir*, for we will soon be in Paris to drink your health in sparkling champagne." "Monsieur," replied Rachel, "France is not rich enough to treat all her prisoners of war to champagne."

WHAT is that which is so brittle that, if you name it, you are sure to break it? Silence.

The doctors allege that corns are the result of downright callousness.

"MAMMA, why is papa bald?" "I am his fourth wife, darling."

Just the press for the agricultural journals—The Hoe.

No man has a right to do as he pleases, except when he pleases to do right.

I UNDERSTAND that a policeman was injured at the fire." "How did that happen? What was he there for?" "I believe he was trying to arrest the flames."

"The lecture season will soon begin," remarks a quiet gentleman editor. "Aha!" says another, "your wife is coming home, eh?"

A VOCALIST was warbling to her own great satisfaction "Oh, would I were a bird." A roug hminer replied, "Oh, would I were a gun."

"PRISONER, have you anything to say in your defence?" "No, your honour, excepting that I did not engage a counsel, and as I saved you from such an annoyance I trust you will take that into your consideration."

A CELEBRATED beauty once asked somebody for a pretty pattern for a night-cap. "Well," said a person, "what signifies the pattern of a night cap?" "Oh, child," said she; "but you know in case of fire!"

"SIR, Alfred, you must decide on a profession." "Yes, uncle." "Do you desire to be a lawyer?" "Why should I be a barrister?" "Then you could study political economy." "Ah, uncle, give me a chance to live without politics or economy."

"AM I not very red, George?" asked Miss Fuss-and-feather, after putting traces of the paintbrush on her cheeks. "No, but I think you are very green," replied the sensible fellow. And he wasn't colour-blind by any means.

"MOTHER," said little Pete, "are hands striking features? Sam told me this morning that our Mary had striking features, and I'd bet he saw her when she struck me because I laughed when he rang the bell."

"WHAT a farmer needs in this world to be successful," remarked Deacon Hayseed, "is a good wife. Then he's all right. My wife could git up in the mornin' at four, milk fifteen cows, feed six horses, git breakfast for twenty hands, an' be all ready for a day's work afore six o'clock. That's what I call a good wife." "Doesn't she do it now, deacon?" he was asked. "Oh! no," wiping away a tear; "she's dead."

JEAN PAUL RICHTER, the distinguished author, was halted once at the gate of a small town in Germany, and was asked to give an account of himself. "What is your name?" asked the gatekeeper. "Richter." "What trade do you follow?" "I am an author." "An author! What's that?" "That means I make books." "Oh! yes, I understand. What new-fangled names they have for everything now-a-days! Here we call a man who makes books a bookbinder."

THE superstitions of seamen are often curious. It is well known that a lawyer, a priest, and a woman are considered unlucky passengers, and it is thought unfortunate to whistle at sea, except in seasons of calm. Then the officers will pace the quarter-deck, and, facing in the direction from which the wished-for breeze should come, whistle loud and long in the hope of raising a breeze.

EXPECTING FULL VALUE.—"There is plenty of time, sir, plenty of time," said an usher to a countryman who, with his girl on his arm, was pushing his way into the theatre. "The performance doesn't begin for an hour yet." "That's all right, mister," said the countryman, breathlessly, "but I bought my ticket two days ago, an' I propose to have the worth of my money."

"How old are you, my little man?" asked a gentleman of a tot of four. "I'm not old," was the indignant reply; "I am almost new."

"ARE you asleep, baby?" "Yes, mamma, and you know the doctor told you not to wake me to give me my medicine."

CLERGYPEMAN: "No, my dear, it is impossible to preach any kind of a sermon to such a congregation of asses." Smart Young Lady: "And is that why you call them 'dearly-beloved brethren'?"

"WHERE are you going?" asked a little boy of another, who had slipped and fallen down on the icy pavement. "Going to get up," was the blunt reply.

AN upset beehive is a rather lively circus to get out of the way of, but it is a mere trifle compared to a woman whose mind is upset as having found a bill for an unknown bonnet in her husband's pocket.

HELPLESS BEINGS.—Greek is the language for poetry, French for love, and Italian for hand-organ melody; but the man with a shirt-collar that doesn't fit is the same helpless being in all.

SHE used to complain of cold feet before she was married. The other day her good old aunt asked her if she was still troubled in that way. The dear little wife simpered hesitatingly, and replied, with sweet simplicity: "Yes: but—but they're not my own feet."

ONE OF THE WEAKER VESSELS.—A gentleman at a public dinner at Leeds, in proposing the health of the ladies, happened to refer to them as "the weaker vessels," when a voice called out from the end of the room, "I nobbut wish th'ou'd our Sall to deal wi' for a fortnight!"

"Oh, my dear, generous husband!" murmurs the fond wife. "How grand you are! I only wish I could be you for just one day." "Why, dearest?" asks the unsuspecting man. "Because then I would buy a new bonnet for my loving little wife," replies the designing creature.

A STATESMAN'S PREFERENCE.—First American tourist: "Is Mr. Gladstone a very homely man?" Second American tourist: "No, I should say not. Why do you ask?" "Because one of the papers say he prefers to be plain Mr. Gladstone."

IT DEPENDED ON CIRCUMSTANCES.—Frivolous young lady, to guide: "How deep is this hole?" Guide: "Never been measured, miss." Frivolous young lady: "Suppose I were to fall down there, where do you suppose I should go to?" Guide: "That depends, miss, upon how you have lived in this world!"

SHE had named Friday of the following week as the day for the wedding. "But Friday is an unlucky day," said George. "Oh, so it is!" she exclaimed. "I had forgotten that. No, it wouldn't do to be married Friday." "How would Saturday or Monday do?" suggested George, tenderly. The girl hesitated and blushed a little. Then she said: "I—I think Thursday would be better, George."

AMONG the "things one would rather not have said" was the remark of a young man at a recent spirit seance. He had received a "communication" from an old sweetheart, supposed to be in the spirit world. Taking the slate from the hand of the triumphant pythoness, he read and then remarked, with a smile of tender retrospective: "Yes I do believe this is genuine. Poor little Lottie! she never could spell." And then he wondered what it was that made the medium blush so.

SAMUEL S. was a servant on a milk farm. One day Mrs. Jones (the farmer's wife) went into the milk-house and found Sam down on his knees before a milk vat, skimming the cream off with his finger and putting it in his mouth. "Oh, Sam'l, Sam'l!" she exclaimed, "I don't like that." "Ah, missus," quoth Sam, nothing disconcerted, "you don't know what's good for yourself."

SOCIETY.

HER MAJESTY has recently presented the German Crown Princess with a handsome dress coach, which she has had expressly built for her eldest daughter. The panels are painted a rich claret colour with lines of crimson in relief. The mountings and fittings are of brass, the interior is upholstered with blue silk damask, bullion fringe and tassels. On the doors and the hind and quarter panels the English and Prussian arms are emblazoned in relief.

ARRANGEMENTS have been completed between Mr. Gordon, of Abergeldie, and the representatives of Her Majesty for a new lease of the estate of Abergeldie as the residence of the Prince of Wales. The lease will comprise the whole estate, with the castle, shooting, fishing, and other rights, and is for nineteen years, at a rent of £3,500 per annum.

BEFORE leaving Eastwell Park, the establishment there having been broken up, the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh presented Mr. Legge, organist of the parish church at Ashford, with a handsome gold pin, set with rubies and sapphires, in recognition of the pains he had taken in his work of giving the young Princesses music lessons and the progress made under his tuition. Princess Victoria of Edinburgh presented the Ashford Cottage Hospital with a large and handsome Noah's Ark before leaving Eastwell.

THE Duchess of Argyll, whose condition was considered hopeless, is progressing gradually towards convalescence.

ONE of Sir John Millais' next contributions to popular art will be a study of child life. It depicts a little girl, dressed in garments of dark-green colour, sitting in the midst of a glowing landscape, blowing soap-bubbles. Sir John has also on the easel a study of one of the heroines of Shakespeare.

PRINCE CHRISTIAN VICTOR, eldest son of Prince and Princess Christian, having terminated his studies at Wellington College, will shortly proceed to Oxford University, where he will finish his education before entering the army.

MISS BRIGHT, on the occasion of her marriage to Mr. Jardine-Jardine, looked exceedingly attractive in a dress of ivory white brocade, trimmed with fine old Flemish lace, a wreath of orange blossom, and tulle veil; her little nephew, dressed in black velvet, bore the bride's train. The seven bridesmaids' dresses were of dark green canvas, with underskirts, waistcoats, and sashes of soft cardinal silk, hats of green straw, trimmed with green and cardinal pompons. Each wore a gold snaffle bangle, and carried a bouquet of carnations and poinsettias, the bridegroom's gift.

A MARRIAGE has been arranged between Mr. Jecelyn Home Thomson, Royal Horse Artillery, son of the Archbishop of York, and Mabel, youngest daughter of the Rev. T. B. Paget, rector of Wilton and Canon of York,

HER MAJESTY has received a novel present from the United States. It is a handsome volume bound in sealskin, with linings of damask satin and hand-painted inscriptions. This volume is one of four made specially for presentation to Her Majesty, the Czar, the Kaiser, and the Emperor of Brazil, the object being to show that at last America has mastered the art of bookbinding, and is now ready to compete with the world.

THE honour conferred on Mr. Dalby may in some measure be attributable to the relief he has given to the Princess of Wales, who for some time was in serious danger of losing her hearing. Mr. Dalby, however, saved her Royal Highness from that unhappy fate, and as a graceful reward has been made Sir William Bartlett Dalby.

STATISTICS.

LONDON.—The largest city in the world is pretty thoroughly English. London, with a population put down at 5,199,166, contains only 80,778 Irish, 49,554 Scotch, and 60,252 foreigners.

DEAF MUTES.—There are in the world 397 institutions for the education of deaf mutes. Germany has 90 of these, France 67, Great Britain 46, and the United States 38. Recent careful estimates place the number of these unfortunate at 800,000.

HEIGHTS OF CLOUDS.—Measurements of the heights of clouds have been made at the Upsala observatory during the past summer. The results are approximately as follows:—Stratus, 2,000 feet; nimbus, or rain cloud, from 8,600 to 7,200 feet; cumulus, from 4,300 to 18,000 feet; cirrus, 22,400 feet. Cloud measurements are always somewhat difficult and uncertain, but these figures are considered fairly exact.

GEMS.

ORGANISATIONS may change or dissolve, but when parties cease to exist liberty will perish.

In the opinion of the world marriage ends all. The truth is precisely the reverse; it begins all.

ENDEAVOUR to be cool and steady upon all occasions; the advantages of such a steady calmness are innumerable.

It is often said that second thoughts are best. So they are in matters of judgment, but not in matters of conscience.

Tis an ill thing to be ashamed of one's poverty, but much worse not to make use of lawful measures to avoid it.

TRUTH needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and defences of error.

The longer we live the more we must endure the elementary existence of men and women; and every brave heart must treat society as a child, and never allow it to dictate.

Look not mournfully into the past—it comes not back again; wisely improve the present—it is thine; go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SAVOURY RICE.—Boil a half-pound of rice in water, with one small onion chopped fine. When tender and nearly dry, stir in two tablespoonfuls of grated cheese, three of tomato-sauce, a teaspoonful of chopped parsley, and half a teaspoonful of sweet herbs, cayenne, and salt, and about an ounce of butter, or a tablespoonful of oil. It should be stiff enough to make a mound on the dish, and must be served hot.

APPLE-CHARLOTTE.—This very old-fashioned but delicious pudding is prepared as follows: Get a plain tin mould, either oval or round, and about five inches deep. Cut some thin slices of stale bread into fingers and rounds, dip these into clarified butter, and line the mould completely, making one piece overlap another, so that there are no holes through which the apple can escape. Bake some apples in a greased dish, without water, till quite soft; beat to pulp, sweeten, and fill the mould. Cover the pudding with a round of stale bread dipped in butter, lay a plate on the top, and bake in a good oven, until the bread is brightly brown. Turn on a hot dish, and serve hot, with milk. Other fruits may be used, instead of apples, for a pudding of this description; but it must be remembered that the pulp must be stiff, not watery. Juicy fruit will make an excellent hydropathic pudding.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Do good for your own satisfaction, and do not care for what follows. Be the cause of grey hairs to no one; nevertheless, for the truth grey hairs are to be disregarded.

IN A FRENCH BANK.—If the teller of a French bank has doubts as to the honesty of an unknown customer, he does not trust to his memory to recall the features of the person he suspects, but calls on science to protect the bank. He gives a private signal to the cashier, and that responsible officer, while the teller is in the act of making payment, brings the photographic camera (conveniently placed beside him, but invisible to the customers) to bear upon the unsuspecting party, and on leaving the bank he leaves a proof of his identity after him without in any degree being conscious of the fact.

PEARLS AND THEIR PRESERVATION.—Pearls deteriorate of age, contact with acids, gas, and noxious vapours of all sorts. This is especially true of all pierced pearls. Various means of restoring them have been tried, but experience shows them to be useless. The best way to preserve pearls is to wipe them with a clear linen cloth after being worn, and deposit them, wrapped in linen, in a closed box or casket. A leading importer of pearls advises that pearl necklaces, which are liable to deteriorate by coming in contact with the skin, be re-strung once a year, as drawing the silk thread out and in through the pierced parts tends to cleanse the pearls. In Ceylon, we are assured, on fairly good authority, that when it is desired to restore the lustre to Oriental pearls the pearls are allowed to be swallowed by chickens. The fowls with this precious diet are then killed, and the pearls regained in a white and lustrous state.

WEDLOCK.—No woman will love a man better for being renowned or prominent. Though he be the first amongst men, she will be proud, not fonder. But give her love, appreciation, kindness, and there is no sacrifice she will not make for his content and comfort. The man who loves her well is her hero and king. In nine cases out of ten it is a man's own fault if he is unhappy with his wife. It is a very exceptional woman who will not be all she can to an attentive husband, and a very exceptional one who will not be very disagreeable if she finds herself wilfully neglected.

CLEVER GIRLS.—Cleverness is an unmixed advantage to young girls. How delightful to a clever girl of fifteen to sixteen, who then perhaps enters upon regular school work for the first time, how delightful is it to her to find herself at the gates of a new world of thought, to feel the thrill of proud exultation which runs through her as she gazes at it, and exclaims with pardonable enthusiasm, "I can, at least, be monarch of all I survey!" How pleasant to see the gratification with which her masters gradually discover that one eager mind is drinking in all they say, and what trouble they will take to answer and even to anticipate her difficulties! How pleasant, again—albeit somewhat dangerous—to receive the respect and admiration which her school-fellows lavish upon her, so long, at least, as she is sweet-tempered as well as clever—to respond to the many demands made upon her for "Just one thought, dear, to put into my essay on 'Procrastination'; I've put in all the dictionary says, but that only fills up half my paper!" to hear the inevitable, "Oh, Ida, will tell you that, she knows everything!" And then at the prize giving, how stimulating is the sense, not only that she is the observed of all observers, but that she is receiving the reward of work well and earnestly done as she bears away prize after prize, only tempered by the regretful wish that poor Melissa, who is so sweet, but anything rather than clever, and other kindred spirits, could have had something more to rejoice in than the success of their friend

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A BEGINNER.—We are not acquainted with the poetess. Writing fair.

ANNIE.—We do not insert advertisements of the kind.

AMY (Glasgow).—You must wait until the young gentleman declares himself. If he really loves you he will not be very long in coming to the point.

R. R. S.—You should wait. Tell your lover frankly and plainly that you will not marry him until matters take such shape as will in some degree, at least, reconcile your parents to the marriage.

LONELY FLO.—1. Not at all improper, but the lady must be quite certain that her love is returned. Give her up, as both parents and lover are not fascinated with her, or a good deal of mischief may arise.

E. D. S.—It would be prudent for you to take plenty of time to consider the matter. Do not allow yourself to be hurried into marriage with your jealous lover. As you have your mother's sympathy and support, you will doubtless come out all right in the end.

C. H. H.—Old postage-stamps are only of value as objects of interest, which many people collect and are willing to pay for. The statement that the Government or somebody will pay a large sum of money for a million of cancelled stamps is without foundation.

R. T. S.—There are persons, calling themselves astrologers, who profess to be able to foretell one's fate by the aspect of the heavens at the hour of his birth. They deal in generalities, and say so many things that now and then one of them may come to pass, but no reliance can be placed upon their predictions.

L. R. F.—The principal wheat-exporting countries at present, besides the United States, are Russia, Denmark, Hungary, Turkey, and Chili. Wheat is largely cultivated in most European countries, but some that a few years ago were exporters do not now raise enough for their own consumption.

C. M. A.—1. Yellow dock root and sarsaparilla will help to purify the blood. You can obtain preparations of them at any druggist's. It will also help you to remove fleshworms. 2. Perfumes should be used very sparingly; even those of the most delicate kind. 3. Glycerine diluted with water will sometimes improve the skin. 4. No personal knowledge on the subject.

PAT.—You should ask your father, or some other relative, to make the inquiries for you about your friend's character. If a lawyer were to get a letter from a person unknown to him, asking questions about an old acquaintance, he would be likely either to leave the letter unnoticed or hand it to the parties concerned.

W. M.—1. Pure glycerine acts on most skins as a gentle emollient, but some persons find it very irritating, so that such simple preparations as cold cream or vaseline, which cause no trouble, is preferable. 2. Mikado is pronounced as a word of three syllables, with the accent on the second. The "i" is short; the "ka" is pronounced like "caw;" and "do" is pronounced to rhyme with "row."

F. F. M.—The first practical friction match was invented in 1829, in England, and by 1833 the phosphorous friction match of the present day was widely introduced throughout Europe, so that your date, 1834, of their introduction into this country is probably correct. It is, however, likely enough that many poor people, and people living in remote country districts never used matches until many years later.

E. T. D.—A child of eleven cannot make an engagement of marriage. Such a childish connection has no binding force whatever unless you have continued to regard each other as betrothed and have had a serious purpose and understanding with reference to marriage since you arrived at the years of maturity. Your parents are your best friends and best advisers. Your beat seems to be very sensible.

L. F.—The word wine, derived from the Greek *oίνος*, is in the Latin *vīnum*, Italian and Spanish *vino*, the Gallic *vi*, Anglo-Saxon *wīs*, Danish *wīn*, German *wein*, Dutch *wīn*, and Portuguese *vīnho*. Of what antiquity is this, the whole world's favourite beverage, may be derived from the fact that Noah's first recorded piece of husbandry is that he "planted a vineyard, drank of the vine, and was drunken." The vine, it is supposed, was first introduced into England by the Romans.

G. R.—Halcyon is the Greek name for kingfisher. The word means to brood (*κύειν* or *συεῖν*) on (*βαῖν*) the sea. The ancient Sicilians believed that the kingfisher laid its eggs on the surface of the sea and brooded upon them for fourteen weeks before the winter solstice. During this time the waves of the sea were always unruled. Dryden says:—

"Amidst our arms as quiet you shall be
As halcyon brooding on a summer sea."

LILY B.—Suppose you paint your friend a pretty satin hand-bag—say one of pale tan, with a spray of blue mourning-glories, or a cluster of blue forget-me-nots, and the coral-red flower-stars of the Cypress vine. If you can paint in water colours it will not be hard to paint on satin. Stretch the material on a board and fix with drawing pins. Then draw the design in pencil. Mix the first wash of colour with Chinese white, and lay it on rather thickly. Then tint and shade with pure colour with the Chinese white. If your friend is to be married in her travelling-dress the bridesmaids can only wear simple walking costumes, chosen so as to set off to advantage the colour the bride has selected.

G. G. W.—It is pleasant to hear of the improvement in the condition of people in remote districts, where they have none of the advantages conferred by railroads, telegraphs, and other modern appliances. Englishmen are bound to improve their condition wherever they live, regardless of the disadvantages of their situation. The weather has been unusually favourable thus far in the East this season, as well as in the West.

T. W. R.—You have a right to your assumed name without going through any legal process; but, in case it should become necessary to identify yourself as the person formerly known by your other name you might find it difficult to do so, publish a notice in some newspaper setting forth the facts, and go before some court and get whatever authorisation the court can give you to use your present name. You cannot alter your naturalization papers.

W. E. R.—Serious specific disease can be conveyed by means of vaccine virus taken from a sore upon a diseased person, but such cases are very rare. When such a case does occur, the symptoms show themselves in a short time and are very marked. There is no course open to the sufferer except to undergo a long and careful treatment at the hands of a regular physician. All danger from this source can be avoided by simply using virus directly from the cow.

L. S. T.—It does not seem as though anything could be done with your husband, except by the moral influence which you and the rest of the family can bring to bear on him. At present he does not appear to be in such a mental condition as would justify proceedings against him; but it may come to that in the end. Meanwhile, you should treat him with all possible forbearance and kindness, and trust to the awaking in him of the better elements of his nature. We sympathise with you.

WHEN I GO AWAY.

I think, if I were to die to-night,
I could close my eyes without one regret;
I should smile to see the signet white
Of the pale king, Death, on my features set.

For it means so much, when the path is steep,
And the feet are torn for the briery way:
"He giveth His well-beloved sleep!"
His love will guard, and his love will keep
All sorrow from me away.

I have no dread of that coming hour,
When my soul goes out as a bird would scar;
When it opens to life as would open a dower,
To bloom and blossom for evermore.

So do not weep when I go away
On the journey that takes me afar from you.
She is through with all pain and anguish, say;
She has opened her eyes to a better day
Than ever on earth she knew!

H. A.

S. N. Q.—Parrots thrive best on canary seed. Hemp seed freely tends to impair digestion, but a tea-spoonful once a week, mixed with the canary seed, is beneficial. A little dry bread, and raw fruit especially, are good for them. All foods such as meat, cake, biscuit, or milk that contain grease, salt or pepper must never be given to them. Keep everything about the cage very clean, and allow no draughts of air upon the birds. One well-trained bird helps another, and also aids the trainer by showing the ways and capacity of birds.

W. H. R. D.—If you mean that, with one hand, you pushed up a dumb-bell weighing 12 lbs., you have very unusual strength. It is doubtful whether the majority of professional and business men could put up fifty pounds even once from the shoulder. Tables of statistics give the weight of the average man of eighteen as about 128 lbs. A healthy man of your weight should lift, on an ordinary lifting machine, with his hands, after a little practice, from three hundred to five hundred pounds. You could probably easily learn to lift a thousand; but, if you are wise, you will practice those exercises which cultivate quickness, grace and activity, rather than those which increase mere strength of muscle, which you have enough already.

L. F. S.—Marriage is a bitter cup without love to sweeten it. Dissolve the pearl of wealth in it as you may there will be a bitter precipitate of regret and freud longing and unsatisfied heart-sighing. The nearness of the tie—the life-long, close association—will grow more and more unbearable. A man is a creature of shrewd though slow instincts, too. He will find out you don't love him, and it will put a demon of retaliation in him perhaps, or it will make him lose his spring of energy and ambition, as you will lose yours. Better marry a sensible, kind-hearted fellow with a good trade or profession, steady habits, and a heart that loves you. If he has a bit of sum in the savings bank or invested in some good way, why all the better.

LODA.—1. The many uses to which India rubber is now applied have all been found out during the present century. The discovery of the way of vulcanising it was made by Charles Goodyear, an American, in the year 1839, but it did not come into use until about 1844. It gets its name from India, because it was first brought from that country. The word *Caoutchouc* is from *Caluchi*, the South American Indian name of India rubber. 2. The East Indian rubber is the juice of a kind of fig tree, which grows to a very great size. The South American rubber is the juice of the syringa tree,

which is also very large. It was so called by the Portuguese because the Indians used little bottles made of the gum to hold water, with which they syringed out their mouths after eating. 3. The trees are tapped by cutting holes through the bark, and the juice is caught in a cup and emptied into a large jar. Moulds made of clay, shaped like shoes, bottles, balls, &c., are then dipped into the juice and dried until the covering is thick enough, when the mould is broken into pieces and poured out.

C. W. B.—The name comes down from the days of Addison and the famous Kit-kat club to which he belonged. Sir Godfrey Kneller painted the portraits of all the members of the bright and noted club, painted them of three-quarter length. It is not generally known why the club was called Kit-kat. It was because of the cook—the skilful and jolly Christopher, or Kit Kat. Mr. Katt's mutton pies were widely celebrated by the club, and mutton pies to this day are called Kit Kat.

G. F. W.—1. Her Majesty's name before her marriage was the same as it is now, Victoria Alexandra. Prince Albert was a member of one of those royal houses which have no surnames in the ordinary sense of the word. His father was Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and the family is the elder, or Albertine branch, of the royal line of Saxony. 2. It is incorrect to speak of anything being between more than two objects. Your sentence should read, "The ground enclosed by the three roads is reserved for a park."

L. B. F.—Your best text-books will be a dictionary, a school text-book of grammar and rhetoric, and good standard English literature. As a special study in the particular line of work which you wish to do, you should read carefully and critically the most successful articles in the papers and magazines. We do not think you would gain much from teachers; the editors and proof-readers will furnish you with plenty of candid, practical criticism, by shortening, altering, or entirely rejecting faulty compositions.

AMY S.—Lucullus was a rich Roman Senator. He was noted for his magnificence, his gluttony and selfishness. He had five thousand rich purple robes, according to Horace, and thousands of pounds were expended on a single meal. One night it was known among his set that preparations had been made for an elaborate supper. But who had been invited? Nobody could hear of anyone who had been asked to the supper. "Who are your guests?" some one of his satellites asked. "No one," was the reply, "Lucullus sups with Lucullus to-night."

LIRA J.—1. The origin of the term philosophy is attributed to Pythagoras, who, in place of calling himself *Sophos*, a wise man, assumed the more modest title of a lover of wisdom. In modern times the term is used in a much greater variety of connections than in his day. 2. The "Philosophy of the Garden" was that of Epicurus, who instructed his pupils in a garden in Athens which he bought for the purpose. "Philosophy of the Porch," that of Zeno and the Stoics, so called because Zeno of Citium and his successors taught in the porch or piazza of the Ptolomei, a great hall in Athens. "Philosophy of the Lyceum," that of Aristotle, the founder of the Peripatetic school, who delivered his lectures in the Lyceum at Athens. "Philosophy of the Academy," that of Plato, who taught his disciples in a grove in Athens called the Academy. 3. Not at present.

P. M.—1. It was in May, 1810, that Lord Byron, in command of Leander, swam across the Hellespont. The distance, however, being two miles, from the European to the Adriatic side, when he reached the latter, from exhaustion, he was compelled to seek repose in the hut of a Turkish fisherman, where he remained carefully attended by the wife for five days. Upon his departure, his lordship, whose rank and name were unknown to the Turkish peasants, received a gift of a loaf, some cheese, a skin of wine, and the blessings of Allah. In return, Byron sent the fisherman a few fishing-nets, a fowling-piece, and several yards of silk for his wife. The Turk, overwhelmed with gratitude, resolved to cross the Hellespont to thank his unknown guest, but in the pass age his boat was upset, and the poor fellow met with a watery grave. 2. Leander swam the Hellespont to visit his love, the fair Hero—at least, so runs the legend.

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London : Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by J. R. Speck; and Printed by WOODFALL AND KINNEAS, Millford Lane, Strand.